

LEGALLY DEAD

MARCIA
HAMILCAR

WITH PREFACE
BY
Dr. L. Forbes
Winslow





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LEGALLY DEAD

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Experiences during Seventeen Weeks'
Detention in a Private Asylum .

BY

MARCIA HAMILCAR



"An honest tale speeds best being plainly told."

—KING RICHARD III.

"If it be well writ, faithful and authentick, it will
live ages; but if it be bad, it will have a quick
journey from its birth to the grave of oblivion."

—DON QUIXOTE.



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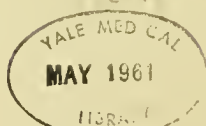
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AN
INTRODUCTION

BY

DR. FORBES WINSLOW

INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Publishers of this book, I have consented to write a short introduction to it.

Though I agree with many of the suggestions of the writer as to the reformation of the Lunacy Laws, especially so far as relates to Private Asylums, I do not in any way hold myself responsible for any strictures passed by her on any individual Nursing Home or Private Asylum. We have her statements, which, I assume, she is prepared to substantiate. I am in perfect ignorance of the individual Nursing Home or of the Private Asylum alluded to by the lady. One thing I am quite sure of, and that is that all Nursing Homes should be under strict supervision and inspection, and that all Private Asylums, inasmuch as they are financial speculations, should be managed by the State, or abolished altogether. Many are kept by non-professional persons who have acquired, or bought, the License from a widow of a deceased medical man, or from some executors of an Estate. "Despair of hope all ye who enter here!" should be placed over the door of such places.

I notice that among the Lunacy Reformers mentioned in "Legally Dead" are the names of Pinel and

Conolly. It is with pride that I beg to include the name of my late Revered Father, as deserving a place in that list. He died in 1874, and in his "In Memoriam" it is written—"Dr. Forbes Winslow, following in the steps of Pinel and the Tukes, of York, was, with the late Dr. Conolly, one of the first to systematise a gentle, persuasive, and loving treatment of the insane, who had hitherto been regarded in the light of wild beasts, to be curbed and restrained by bolts, bars, and keepers' whips, rather than as human beings, fallen indeed from their high estate, but amenable to tenderness and judicious kindness."

This was written by me in 1875, the year after his death.

Since then things have again deteriorated.

There is one great truism in "Legally Dead," and that is the attention drawn to the fact with reference to the ignorance of the general practitioner in matters pertaining to Lunacy. This is lamentable in many cases, and so long as a compulsory study of Brain diseases does not form part of the medical man's curriculum, and an attendance at an Asylum to study Lunacy, does not also form part of his studies, so long must this continue. The Medical Student is willing to learn anything during his hospital attendance. He attends lectures on subjects which are of no avail to him, but ignores those pertaining to Lunacy, which is one, if not the most important part of a medical man's education.

The late publicity relating to Nursing Homes should be the means of effectually inducing the Government to legislate on this important matter. If the writer of this book was incarcerated in a Nursing Home and restraint was used, unless she had been legally placed under certificates, an illegal act has been committed, and she has her remedy. By Section 315 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, it is stated that "Every person who, except under the provisions of this Act, receives or detains a lunatic, or alleged lunatic, in an institution for lunatics or FOR PAYMENT TAKES CHARGE OR RECEIVES to board or lodge or detains a lunatic or alleged lunatic in an unlicensed house shall be guilty of a misdemeanour and in the latter case shall also be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds."

If, as the writer states, that after five weeks' residence in that home she was certified and sent to an asylum, an illegal act was evidently committed by the lady in charge of the Nursing Home, who was, assuming all facts stated as correct, guilty of an infringement of the Lunacy Act (if restraint was used during this period). This is a grave offence, and should be promptly brought to the knowledge of the Commissioners in Lunacy. The restraint used towards her, if she can substantiate the same, was illegal and unjustifiable. A keeper of a nursing home who takes charge of a patient for profit, who is uncertificated, lays herself open as follows :

1st. False imprisonment on the part of the person confined.

2nd. Action for assault if restraint was in any way used.

3rd. Prosecution by the Lunacy Authorities for infringement of Section 315 of the Lunacy Act.

4th. If the lady was detained as a "single patient" under certificate, then the Nursing Home would, for the time being, be liable to be inspected and visited by the Commissioners in Lunacy. In this case a medical practitioner would have been appointed, called the 'Medical Attendant,' whose duty it would have been to have visited the patient periodically, and to have kept records in a book called the "Medical Visitation Book." In addition to this there would have been a book in which is entered any restraint used, and the nature of this, the duration of such, and the reasons for so using it, and the name of those ordering the same. This book is required by Act of Parliament to be kept and laid before the Commissioners in Lunacy at the time of their visitation of the alleged lunatic.

If the lady was detained simply on the request of her sisters WITHOUT being properly certified, there are good grounds for an action both as far as she is concerned, and also the authorities. It is a monstrous thing that any person can be submitted to ill-treatment, when, though being regarded as of unsound mind, the proper legal formalities have not been

complied with. It is to protect similar cases from the cruelty of some Nursing Homes, or to those who undertake the care of quasi-lunatics in their own homes, "for profit," that the Act of Parliament is so stringent. This Act does not admit of more than one construction, which being interpreted is that any proprietor of a nursing home taking such a case into her house must, in the first instance, be armed and legally protected by having the case properly certified, and the Lunacy Commission notified of the fact. We read that after a certain period she was transferred to a Private Asylum. The lady admits that her condition was not satisfactory, so far as her mental state was concerned, but complains that she ought not to have been certified, but taken care of by her sisters at her own home. Not an unreasonable statement. In my opinion, many an incipient case is driven mad from association with lunatics of the description one meets with in asylums. I quite agree with what she says as to their being intermediate places for the reception of acute but curable cases. This is what I have advocated, and am still endeavouring to obtain legislation on. In my opinion asylums are only for chronic cases, or those dangerous to themselves or others. All acute and curable cases should be placed in hospitals for treatment. These should be under proper inspection. The inmates of the latter should not be called "lunatics," but simply "mentally afflicted." The name lunatic casts a stigma upon the

unfortunate invalid which can never be eradicated. It is the most cruel reflection. The stigma of lunacy is as bad as that of criminal. It is a family stain which will be handed down to posterity. It can never be blotted from the records of the Commissioners in Lunacy. The fact that she receives a paper that she has been discharged, "relieved" or "recovered," does not erase this from the official books.

The description given by the writer of her treatment in a Private Asylum does not differ from that in any other institution of a like nature. Everything is done of a persuasive nature to induce the wretched person, broken down by some curable nervous complaint, to enter one of these "havens of rest" for treatment. Everything of the nature of *colour de rose* is argued in its favour. Once enter those doors which are flung open as you do so, then a stigma is cast upon your name which to your dying day will haunt you both night and day. Many of these are purely mercenary speculations kept by lay individuals. A person can be placed there by an interested relative, and is at the beck and call of this person as to how long he can be so incarcerated. He alone decides who is able to visit the patient. His authority is adamant. I am speaking of what I know to be the case. Often the Medical Officer in charge co-operates with him, and the combination of the two is sufficient to keep at bay any relative, and to induce the Commissioners in Lunacy, to whom application may have been made for

permission to visit, to endorse the opinion of the resident doctor. I have hundreds of letters in my possession substantiating what I have just stated. One case I know of where the Medical Superintendent said to the petitioner, who is the one responsible for the incarceration of his relative, "Never mind, we have got him safe, and we intend to keep him." This was given in reply to a request by immediate relatives to visit the patient, whom they considered to have been unjustly detained, and who were anxious that a little change should be tried outside the four walls of an asylum. In perusing "Legally Dead," I notice that a statement is made as to the destruction of certain letters written by the lady during her incarceration there. I would draw attention to Section 41 of the Lunacy Act, in which it is enacted that every letter written by a patient in an asylum has to be placed before the Commissioners at the time of their visit; that is to say, those letters which have not been sent as directed. Any medical officer who does not comply with this, or who destroys the same, is liable, by that Section, "to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds."

The writer states that the Medical Superintendent admitted destroying some of these. She has again her remedy, if she can prove what she states.

As I in every way agree with all the writer suggests for the amelioration of our Lunacy Law as set forth at the end of "Legally Dead," there is no occasion for

me to dwell upon their discussion. The lucidity of the suggestions speak for themselves. That private asylums and private Nursing Homes are a social blot upon society there can be no possible doubt. I think, however, that the latter ought to be allowed to exist, provided the State makes provision for their proper inspection periodically. As to the former, I say wipe them off from the face of the earth. They are private speculations; there is no desire, in those held by lay proprietors, to cure the patient, so long as the money does not run short, when they will then be only too eager to get them removed from durance vile, recovered or otherwise, on any pretence possible. The attendants are often cruel and inhuman; they exceed their duties; the Lunacy Commissioners are deceived. I say this advisedly. Everything is prepared when it is known the Commissioners are in the house or neighbourhood. Imbecile patients are induced to try and play chess or draughts with other inmates. Another poor wretch is set down at the piano to sing. Like the Maid in Bedlam she has been driven mad from unrequited love, and sings:

One morning very early, one morning in the spring,
I heard a maid in Bedlam, who mournfully did sing,
Her tears they trickled down her cheeks as mournfully sang she,
I love my love, I love my love, because my love loves me."

Such is the sad refrain sung by many an inmate of a Lunatic Asylum. Young girls driven mad through disappointment in love. The person responsible for

this is in the enjoyment of his *mens sano in corpore sano* a free agent, who probably never gives one thought to that heart he has broken, and who is a hopeless lunatic.

The Commissioners probably well know this refrain as they enter the room. Flowers are arranged about. This is nothing more than a species of deception to mislead the authorities. That delightful "extra" provided at a private asylum—I was going to say luxury—in the shape of a "special attendant" at the rate of three guineas extra, requires observation. I would advise that no one should be taken in by such an offer, even with the prospect of the delightful society of a beery companion being provided by the management.

I am glad that the author of "Legally Dead" has had the pluck of her opinion in bringing certain facts before the public, but as I said at the commencement of this introduction, I do not hold myself responsible for any personal statements made by her. I simply have discussed the Lunacy Reform question from an abstract point of view. It is not my intention to give any opinion as to whether the lady was legally or otherwise detained, as I have never seen her. With regard to this matter, let Chapters IV. and V. speak for themselves.

FORBES WINSLOW.

PREFACE

THIS book does not claim to be in any sense of the term a literary production. To give the actual experiences, and to describe the unnecessary sufferings during a short detention in a private lunatic asylum endured by one woman—typical, alas! of many thousands—is its *raison d'être*.

It is a true, plain, unvarnished tale, untouched by the glamour of imagination. The writer has more than one object in giving as vivid a picture of life in a "house of sighs and moans and tears," as it is in her power to depict. She will endeavour to show how the law facilitates the immuring of an obnoxious member of a family, or anyone, in an asylum, whilst it places almost insuperable obstacles in the way of his or her discharge from it. She hopes to aid, as far as lies in her power, the transformation of those now dread abodes called lunatic asylums into what they ought to be, viz., hospitals, in the truest sense of that word, for mental diseases.

To do this, the evils of the present system—or rather utter lack of system—must be brought clearly into the light of day. Then its condemnation will be assured. But how can this be done, when the free Press of England is rigidly closed to the real

grievances of the insane? Only by such a work as this. The law, the medical profession, ancient custom and use, assign the lunatic a place below the criminal in the social scale. Yet what is his crime? Simply the particular form of his disease, on the subject of which almost as much ignorance prevails in the medical profession as among the general public.

Force, cruelty, restraint, and repression are gradually disappearing from our prison systems; yet their use is still justified by the sane in the case of the insane! If each individual in these Isles could be brought into personal touch with the mentally afflicted, and take a personal interest in them, a new era would dawn for these, the saddest, the most neglected of God's created beings; and the bitter cry of the demoniac in the New Testament, "Torment me not," which to the shame of the sane still rings from shore to shore of these so-called Christian Isles, would be silenced, and the greatest blot on our civilization and humanity be removed. That this book may attract attention to the bitter need for drastic reform in the treatment of the insane is the earnest prayer of its author.

M. H.

LEGALLY DEAD

CHAPTER I

WANTED : FRIENDS FOR THE INSANE

IT has been aptly said with regard to reform, "that it takes infinite time and patience to effect even the very slightest"; also that "nothing is more characteristic of the present age in England than the tendency to grow hysterical over imaginary evils while real evils leave it unmoved." The urgent need for drastic reform in the treatment of the insane, and the difficulty of effecting even the slightest, proves the truth of the one quotation, and the callous indifference, the utter apathy of the general public to the real evils of our present-day asylum "treatment" (if such absolute lack of scientific application and knowledge may be dignified by the word) and the hysterical outcry made by thousands in this country over the sufferings of the dumb creation, whilst deliberately ignoring the often greater cruelties practised upon human souls and bodies made in God's own image, proves the correctness of the other.

Not that we are irresponsible towards the creatures, "whose dumbness is the very oratory of

pity," as Fuller reminds us; but ought not human beings to receive, at least, as much consideration as the dumb animals? Such, however, is not the case, as I can prove without difficulty. One instance alone will suffice. How many societies and associations exist for the benefit of our dumb friends? Truly their name is legion. How many, however, are in existence to aid, to help, to cheer the most forlorn, the most pitiable of all the suffering sons and daughters of woe on this earth? One; and only one! And that limits its assistance to those insane persons who are discharged cured. There is not one existing society to *protect* insane persons from the inhumanity of the sane! Yet there are scores to protect the dumb creation, and rightly too, from man's unnecessary and often wanton cruelty, which is in itself a proof that the natural instincts of civilized man are still brutal. Hence the need for the protection of the insane from the no less unnecessary and often wanton cruelty of those charged with their care, who, knowing how defenceless, how helpless, how utterly their victims are at their mercy, abuse their trust, and indulge their brutal instinct, knowing, too, that they are secure not only from punishment, but even from rebuke. Is it possible that one society, admirable as are its aims, and equally admirable the work it accomplishes, can grapple with all the cases needing assistance, when we consider that the number of insane persons confined in public

and private asylums in these islands exceeded, in 1900, 150,000 souls? And that the greater number of these belong to the classes whose illness spells ruin and beggary if they recover, and return to the world again? Surely no further proof can be required of the truth of the remark made by a doctor after twenty years' work among the poor insane: "After all, what the insane want most is a friend!"

This remark crystallizes in one sentence the bitter need to-day of friends and help for these the despairing, friendless flotsam and jetsam of life's stormy seas.

A learned judge in the hearing of a recent lawsuit in a London court inquired for a witness; then, correcting himself, added, "But he is dead." "No," responded a barrister, "he is in a lunatic asylum." "The same thing," judicially replied the judge, "he is *legally* dead."

Now it is for these same legally dead that I plead; my object is to rouse the apathy of the Public on the subject of the insane; to enlist the sympathies of the man in the street, of the public or private woman, in their suffering and abused and thus deserving brothers and sisters. Only those who, like the writer, have sojourned as a patient in one of those dread abodes called lunatic asylums, can fully appreciate the truth of the doctor's remark. And if I can, by relating my experiences and what I saw around me, place before the sane, who care so little for the

insane, the special need which these latter have of a friend, I shall in part accomplish the objects I have in view, which are to show up the defects of the present system, and to secure for this ever-increasing army of martyrs, the same chance to recover, the same scientific treatment, the same skilful healing and nursing, the same tender, gentle care, which are so freely lavished in our hospitals to-day on the sane, but all of which are utterly lacking in the treatment of the insane.

Do the mentally sound, in these days of haste and speed, give themselves time to consider what is the daily life of the living Dead? They have probably never been brought into contact with the insane, consequently lack the personal touch which alone is wanting to arouse the sympathy of even the most stony-hearted, with the saddest, the most helpless, the most abused of God's created beings, made in His image, but who, in the majority of cases, from the stress and strain of modern life, have temporarily lost His most precious gift—that of reason. Have the mentally sound no responsibility towards their weaker brethren? Does the golden rule apply to the sane only? No. The sane shrink from the insane with a fear that is not unnatural, but ought that fear to lead to a shirking of responsibility?

Let us see what the result is of this apathy of the Press and Public towards the cruel treatment of the insane? One result is that those, who from the very

nature of their affliction should receive the most enlightened care and the most scientific treatment, are left to the ignorant, the untrained, the careless, and usually brutal attendants, who may with impunity beat, starve, degrade, ill-use, and torture them mentally and physically; nay, often directly and indirectly cause their death. But of what account is the life of an inmate of an asylum? Of less account than the lowest orders of the brute creation. For these latter some scores of societies have been formed, laws made, and money and time freely given to protect them from the naturally brutal instincts of man, and rightly too. But what societies are formed for the prevention of far greater cruelties from being inflicted by the naturally brutal man or woman on our legally dead? Not one. Human beings, our brothers and sisters, are securely entombed behind the bolts and bars of our lunatic asylums, where they are as completely at the mercy and in the power of doctors and attendants as are the dumb dogs, horses, rats, and rabbits in the hands of the vivisector. Has a sane man or woman ever stopped to consider what his or her position would be if immured in one of these living tombs? Nay, to form any idea would be impossible, and in many respects a prison is far preferable.

Let us now consider for a moment the position of a lunatic. First of all, he or she is deprived of that birthright supposed to be the most sacred

inheritance of every free-born Briton, Liberty, for which our forbears freely sacrificed money and life in order to secure it to us for ever; then he is also deprived of the privilege of privacy. Not only during the long, monotonous days, but during the weary, never-ending nights he is never alone. He is deprived even of the solace of forgetfulness in blessed sleep, for the other inmates of his ward often make night hideous with their screams and cries, whilst the heavy-footed, loud-voiced attendants eat and drink and make merry by night, which is their day. To sleep under such conditions is impossible, yet sleep is Nature's healer, especially in mental diseases. The doctors and attendants, however, would seem to so arrange that it shall be denied the lunatic. Deprived, too, of sending letters, if the doctor chooses to refuse this privilege; of personal clothing, and all personal belongings; of writing materials, and of all working implements. Can a sane individual picture himself in such a position? A woman may not use a needle, nor a pair of scissors, nor a man a penknife; but must sit throughout the weary hours absolutely unemployed. Only those who have undergone such an experience can fully realize the blessing of work. Completely cut off from all communication with the outside world, whose echoes faintly reach him as though he inhabited some other sphere; legally dead, and of no account in the eye of the law or of his fellow-creatures, and least

of all of those whose pockets he fills in a private asylum; his just complaints unheeded; his word discredited; the Press rigidly closed to his very real grievances only, whilst open widely to the imaginary ills of any party, faction, or class; alone, without a friend, or any tribunal to whom he can appeal for even the scantiest justice; denied all redress for unprovoked assaults, unmerited blows, for unnecessary detention in cold cells; subject at the whim of doctor or attendant to the remnants of inquisitorial tortures in the shape of feeding tubes and gags, which to our shame are still in daily use in our asylums—what a position for a human being in this enlightened, this civilized, this humanitarian, this philanthropic England at the beginning of the twentieth century!

Should a patient by chance recover—and the chances are under the present “system” perhaps one in a hundred—the stigma of lunacy attaches to his name for the rest of his life, and how is he regarded by his family and friends? As a disgrace in a way by the one, and as a nonentity by the other. He is deprived in the asylum of every attribute of a man; if placed in a private establishment, he is fleeced in every possible way; he pays for the fare of a first-class hotel, and gets a table that for the coarseness of the food and the horrible cooking would disgrace a work-house. He pays the price of skilled attention, and is committed to the care of untrained, ignorant attendants, who are utterly unfitted for the work, and

retard his recovery, by their want of knowledge of his disease. He may, too, at the caprice of an ill-natured, ill-tempered attendant, or from the indifference of the medical attendant, be put back in his progress towards recovery by being sent to a lower ward, amongst the worst cases. What would be said of a doctor who, when a sane patient's limb was setting or wound healing, if he deliberately, as a punishment for some trivial breach of an unimportant hospital rule, broke the bone apart, or opened again the wound? Would such a system be tolerated in a hospital for the sane? Yet precisely such "treatment" is meted out to the insane every day in the year, in our asylums, and not a word of protest may the victim utter, not a voice in this kingdom is raised in deprecation of such senseless "treatment"; simply because the sufferer is insane his recovery may be retarded in every possible way; he is of less account than worms and beetles, *he has no friends*. Yet in some cases even the living death of an asylum is preferred by those who have recovered to facing the world again.

A lunatic does not cease to feel; he or she feels acutely the sad anomalous position they are compelled to occupy, and is not Death kinder than life in the case of the insane? Is it surprising that dread of incarceration, with its deprivations and ignominy and brutal "treatment," should lead those whose reason is tottering on its throne to take their lives,

rather than subject themselves to the tender mercies of our present-day asylums? Is it surprising that those who have experienced the iron rule of these establishments prefer death by their own hand to a repetition of the torture they have already experienced? Ought, I say, such a state of things to be permitted? Are the insane without the pale of humanity; have they no right to the scientific treatment lavished upon the sane? The diseases from which they suffer are the most subtle of all that flesh is heir to; ought they then to be treated by the general practitioner, who in the greater number of instances is ignorant both in theory and practice of the mental ills he treats so airily? For it is a well-known fact that these latter do not take the important place they ought to do in the curriculum of students for the medical profession.

Physical ailments always receive the first attention, and leave but little time for the study of mental diseases, thus only the merest elementary principles are as a rule mastered by the man who becomes a general practitioner. Yet he it is who consigns his mental patients—often most unnecessarily—to asylums. Only a mental specialist should be permitted to treat a patient suffering from any derangement of the mind, more especially when the symptoms first present themselves, because this is the most critical period. If every reception order could be examined, not one in a hundred would be

found to be a correct diagnosis; yet when a patient enters an asylum he is treated in accordance with the reception order—as was done in my own case. Surely common-sense and reason ought to lead a superintendent of an asylum to put the patient under observation for at least ten or twelve hours, in order that the correctness of the general practitioner and friends' statements might be tested before the adoption of extreme measures. But common-sense and reason do not enter into asylum management or so-called treatment; and the ignorance of doctors, nurses, and relatives, who consign the patients to their living graves is unrighteously visited upon their victim's head. It cannot be gainsaid that it is the duty of the sane to see that the insane have the same chance to recover from a mental illness that they themselves have in the case of a physical affliction. Nor can it be gainsaid that the insane have the same right to recover mentally that have the sane physically; yet of this right they are unjustly deprived; moreover, the "treatment" meted out to them actually increases and in many cases induces the disease it is ignorantly supposed to cure.

This state of things is entirely due to the apathy and indifference of the Public; to the incredulity and selfishness of the sane, who take refuge behind the excuse of the first murderer, and say with him, "Am I my brother's keeper? There are the Commissioners, paid high salaries, too, to visit the asylums;

doctors are humane nowadays; that cruelty is committed is nonsense—sheer delusion! I don't believe it." Ah, but this incredulous person would tell another tale if he spoke from experience, as I am doing! And it is this very incredulity, this apathy, this selfishness which forms the stronghold behind which doctors and attendants entrench themselves, and defy their victims. Stout contradiction of unnecessary, often wanton, cruelty or neglect on the part of the strong is all that is necessary to disprove the assertions of the weak. Naturally, doctors and attendants support each other; the word of a lunatic is believed by no one; the charge is regarded as a delusion or the result of malice, or exaggeration.

As an instance, I may here give an incident, which came under my notice during the seventeen weeks I spent in a private asylum. A patient who, from the first moment I saw her, excited my deepest sympathy, was found to have a large contusion on her arm. Hers was the most pitiful and painful case in the house, but this did not prevent her from receiving brutal treatment, and the hurt was caused by a severe blow dealt by one of the worst of the attendants. The poor girl, when questioned by the matron, said what was perfectly true, viz., that the attendant had struck her. This charge was stoutly denied, and attributed to the "nasty temper" of the patient. At least half a dozen patients had witnessed what was a brutal, unprovoked assault on a weak

and defenceless girl, yet not one was allowed to give any evidence. The poor girl insisted for some time in her charge, but she was at length talked down by the virago, and so scolded by the matron for "injuring" herself, that her poor wits deserted her, and at last she humbly apologised to the brutal woman who had severely hurt her! Anything more pitiful than that poor, distraught girl's apology I have never heard, and I trust never to hear again, or to be a witness to so painful a scene; all the more painful to me, because I was powerless to raise my voice in the poor victim's defence, or to procure just punishment for her assailant.

Let but public apathy be roused, let but the supine selfishness of the average man and woman be broken through, let but the real need for *friends* for the insane be made widely known, and surely there will be a response to the call commensurate with the need. Then the present "system"—antiquated, inhuman, and inefficient—will be swept away; for overwhelming proofs of its utter uselessness, its harmfulness, its crass stupidity, will be forthcoming, and treatment in consonance with modern science and skill be substituted. Then trained, educated men and women will replace the unskilled, ignorant, often brutal attendant of to-day, and mental diseases will be treated from the outset by mental specialists only. The present haphazard, unscientific treatment of the general practitioner will be condemned, as it deserves

to be, and another, and a better era for the mentally afflicted dawn. Then measures will be preventive, and mental illnesses become curable, as they undoubtedly are now, with proper treatment. Were the same chances given the insane to recover from their mental diseases which are lavished upon the sane to overcome physical ills, there would be no chronic cases as at present. There ought to be no such thing in this world as a chronic mental case; nor would there be, if mental sufferers were treated scientifically, reasonably, and properly. That our asylums are half-filled with these is a disgrace to our humanity, Christianity, and civilization.

Every year the asylums of these islands have to be enlarged—so serious is the increase of mental diseases—and in the case of public institutions, at the cost of the taxpayer; would not, then, a preventive system, which was also curative, be preferable to the present wholesale manufacturing of chronic lunatics, from the standpoint of economy alone?

But to effect this very radical, almost drastic, reform every sane man and woman must feel him or herself a *friend* to the weaker brethren, whose position at present is so anomalous, so defenceless, so powerless; whose mute agony there is now none to voice, whose mute appeals for participation in the benefits enjoyed as a right by the sane, are unheeded by a world of men and women who leave them severely alone, whilst the bitter cry for justice from

the oppressed still goes up to Heaven. And surely a day will come, when the blood of these martyrs will be required at the hands of those who have destroyed not only their minds but their bodies; and it will also be required of those who stood passively by, or afar off, and refused the help which should have been not only a duty, but a privilege to give; for,

*“What higher aim can man attain,
Than conquest over human pain?”*

They who read these pages may, although now in sound mental health, yet succumb to some kind of mental disease. Then, if an experience such as mine should fall to his or her lot, and then only, will the truth of my seemingly exaggerated view of the present “system” be verified.

To accomplish the reforms, upon which the national mental health depend, every sane man and woman must act as a *friend*; societies by hundreds must be formed, knowledge of mental diseases must increase, not only among the medical fraternity but also among laymen; pathology must be included in First-aid Curriculums, and why should it not form a subject for study by the amateur? Surely a sound mind is as important as a sound body, and to know how to give First-aid in a case of mental illness as necessary as in the case of a broken limb. Pressure must be brought to bear upon our legislators, and many of the degrading, irksome, and unnecessary

disabilities under which lunatics now labour be removed, and more enlightened laws take their place; laws that will protect the helpless from the abuse of the powerful. In the case of charges brought by lunatics against doctors and attendants, thorough investigation should be made, and the evidence of the insane be given in open court, as in the case of the sane; and unprovoked assaults on a lunatic be awarded the same punishment, as would be meted out in the case of two sane persons. But when will these changes—so sadly needed—be brought about? When the sane shall be in every acceptance of the term a friend to the insane; but not before. Is it hopeless to expect such a complete transformation in the surroundings and in himself, of the despised, outcast lunatic, as this friendship would effect? Time alone will show.

The author of "A Mind that Found Itself," in his conclusion of that remarkable book, says, "There is but one remedy for the evils attending the mechanical restraint of the insane. At once and for ever abandon the vicious and crude principle which makes its use possible. The question is, will the reader help to bring about improved conditions? If so, let him take his stand as an advocate for Non-Restraint. So will he befriend those unfortunates whose one great need may be epitomized in the words

For these extracts I am indebted to Mr. Clifford W. Beers, author of "A Mind that Found Itself."

of a man who worked for a score of years among the insane. His simple, though vital remark to me was, "After all, what the insane most need is a *friend*!"

"The insane are still human; they love and hate, and even possess a sense of humour. The worst are responsive to kindness; their gratitude is often livelier than that of normal men and women. Any person who has worked among the insane and *done his duty* by them, can testify to cases in point; even casual observers have noted the fact that the insane are often most appreciative. Thackeray relates in "Vanity Fair," Chapter lvii., "I recollect seeing, years ago at the prison for idiots and madmen at Bicêtre, near Paris, a poor wretch bent down under the bondage of his imprisonment and his personal infirmity, to whom one of our party gave a halfpenny-worth of snuff, in a cornet or "screw" of paper. The kindness was too much for the poor epileptic creature. He cried in an anguish of delight and gratitude; if anybody had given you or me a thousand a year, or saved our lives, we could not have been so affected."

And I can fully endorse this opinion, for I received during my detention far more gratitude from those of the insane whom I tried to help—oh, so little! for more was not in my power—than I ever received from the sane for far greater benefits. Believe me, the insane are not ungrateful, perhaps because they receive so little kindness, are so unused to

consideration from the sane, and consequently appreciate these more. Alas ! there is at present little fear that they will ever be sated with kindness from their sane brothers and sisters !

With regard to the treatment of the insane to-day, Mr. Beers says in the first chapter of "A Mind that Found Itself," and I quote him because I could not put as forcibly as he does the great need that exists for drastic reform in the case of our mentally afflicted :—

"Great advances towards the intelligent and humane care of the insane have no doubt been made—advances so great that the majority of insane persons in this country—U.S. America—are now treated with a consideration which amounts to kindness. But a helpless and irresponsible minority, numbering thousands, are still being subjected to abuse as brutal as any ever visited on insane persons during those centuries when the strong took pleasure in torturing the weak.

"That insane persons are still abused is suspected by the public at large ; but direct and convincing proof of that fact is seldom presented. I am sure that the proof I now offer will ring true, and will contribute to the correction of many mistaken ideas regarding the insane, and their treatment, and regarding insanity itself. In the discussion of the crude methods of treatment which now obtain, all abuses which fell under my observation will of necessity be

laid bare. A former victim of these methods, I feel at liberty to attack them. As the hostages which civilization gives to Progress, the insane are entitled to the best of treatment. Certainly they are not deserving of the worst.

“The subject which I treat is not alone humanitarian. Its economic importance can hardly be overestimated. The ravages of insanity cost the world millions of dollars, and thousands of lives, each year. There are not fewer than 200,000 insane persons in our asylums, hospitals, sanatoriums, and homes. There are at least 180,000 mental incompetents in Great Britain, and a like number in France and Germany. Every civilized country has its burdensome proportion. Nor are these afflicted ones the only sufferers. It is safe to assume that each insane person has at least five relatives and friends interested in his or her welfare. Granting this, there are one million people in this country (U.S. America)—one-eightieth of the entire population—directly or indirectly affected by this most dreaded disease. And any one of the remaining seventy-nine millions (in America) may sooner or later be forced by Fate to join this army of distress.

“In spite of the gravity of these conditions—which apply equally to Great Britain—comparatively little is being done to combat the present irresistible advance of insanity. No important phase of life is so generally misunderstood; and no equally important

subject is so consistently and willingly ignored by all; except the few whose paid duty it is to care for the insane. The only real fight against this insidious disease is being carried on in a desultory manner by a few unselfish scientists who are devoting their time to investigation, in most instances without the support they deserve.

“There is every reason to believe that many forms of insanity will finally be rendered amenable to treatment. With smallpox conquered; diphtheria doomed; yellow fever confined within limits; and tuberculosis partially controlled, and not infrequently cured, why should insanity remain for ever on the list of incurable diseases? Though some forms of it may continue to baffle the alienist, recognized authorities predict that most forms will in time prove curable. But the day of its even partial defeat cannot come until systematic scientific research has first done its work—a work of years. Why should such research in a scale in keeping with the importance of the problem be longer delayed? The fight may cost millions, but will not the eventual payment of an inevitable indemnity more than off-set the cost? Even if there were no economic advantage to be gained, would not the dividend which will be added directly to the sum of human happiness be a sufficient reward? The people of this age can erect no more enduring monument to themselves than by doing that which will make it possible for posterity to regard the

Twentieth Century as the century in which the cause and cure for most forms of mental diseases were discovered."

Further, Mr. Beers states that his object in giving his experiences to the world is three-fold. First to rob insanity of many of its terrors. Secondly that the perusal of them may lead to the formation of a society endowed for the sole purpose of solving the stubborn problem, and so raise the standard of treatment to such a level that existing shortcomings will be for ever done away with. Thirdly, he hopes that the beneficent rich may be prompted to come to the aid of the States and Nations by supplying funds for the erection and endowment of model institutions, wherein mental and nervous diseases, in their incipient and curable stages, may be treated with maximum efficiency.

In looking over the list of wills of the philanthropic rich, as published in our newspapers, one is struck with the number and amount of bequests left to hospitals and societies for the alleviation of physical ailments, and for the prevention of cruelty to children and animals. It would be interesting to find out how much has been bequeathed for the benefit of the insane during the last fifty years. Were this done, it would be found that only a few thousand pounds had been left for these; and this not because the charitably inclined are without sympathy for this form of ill-health, but from the fact that the

Press, by rigidly closing its doors to the evils that are known to exist, keep back the knowledge of the bitter need for help from those who would be disposed to give it. Our philanthropic rich are in ignorance of the despairing cry of the neglected insane, who have no friend, when the waters are troubled by an angel's visit, to put them in the pool; hence the disease in England that to-day claims more victims than any other is neglected by the medical profession; the recovery of afflicted thousands left to themselves or to chance, and the necessary scientific research into the diseases of the mind put on one side, because those of the body can voice themselves, and come to the front, whilst the mute appeal of our insane is heard only within and not without the walls of their living graves. They are legally dead; dead men tell no tales. The rich endow hospitals that our physically suffering fellow-creatures may be treated individually, and have a chance to recover their physical health. Does it never occur to them that mental sufferers have the same claim on their charity and help; that they have the same right to recover, and that if their form of disease is incurable they ought to be allowed to lead comfortable and even happy lives, as do the physically incurable in our many homes and hospitals devoted exclusively to them?

If only our philanthropists could see the lives of chronics in our private and public asylums, sufficient money would be forthcoming within a few months to

provide these victims of ignorance with at least kind treatment and a peaceful retreat in which to end their unhappy days; and funds would be found with which to endow colleges and hospitals for the research work in connection with mental diseases, on similar lines to those now in vogue for the cure of physical ills, which our mental specialists all agree is one of the pressing needs of the hour; societies to brighten the lives of the inmates would be formed in the neighbourhood of every asylum, and another era dawn for the most neglected, the most cruelly abused of God's creatures. Insanity would then no longer inspire dread and horror, as at present, and its victims would yearly decrease, when knowledge of a curative treatment was widely spread and practised.

To-day ignorance reigns over the victims of this the most dreaded of diseases. To sweep this away, to awaken widespread interest in the subject of insanity, and of the insane, among the people in whose hands lies the power to effect reforms, is the writer's object, and that her humble effort may make a friend of every reader, and that the numbers of the latter may amount to millions, is the earnest prayer of the feeble woman whose power to help her afflicted brothers and sisters lies only in her pen; imperfections of style, and lack of literary elegance in setting forth the need for help must be pardoned, and not be allowed to damage the cause, for which she pleads as earnestly as though the genius of a Dickens guided her hand. "An honest

tale speeds best being plainly told." And this plain and "authentick" tale the writer hopes will plainly show the need for help and sympathy of a practical nature. May those in a position to give one or both be led to do so, and the dark, hopeless shadowed lives that fill our asylums to-day be changed into brightness and pleasantness; the blight that hangs over these institutions be swept away by the mighty wind of Public Opinion, and the greatest blot on our civilization be thus removed; the joy of living be given back to despairing thousands, who now pray daily—if they pray at all—for Death, who alone can burst asunder the bonds that so cruelly bind them, and restore them to freedom. Is it right, is it just, that Death should be the only friend known to the insane?

At the present moment there are thousands of human beings suffering from the devastating floods that have swept away life and property in France to a degree unparalleled in modern times. With that charity, generosity, and munificence that has ever characterized the Chief Magistrate of our Metropolis, a fund has been opened for the relief of the destitute and suffering, to which a hearty response has been made from the Monarch on his throne, and the Queen, to the artisan; and whilst commending such practical sympathy and generosity one cannot help asking why the sufferers in a foreign country should so appeal to us, whilst the equally deserving in our own land—

our own fellow-citizens—die for the lack of scientific treatment, sympathy, generosity, in a word—a friend? Shall our mental sufferers continue to lack the help so freely given to outsiders, so sadly needed at home?

As a proof of the many whom one kindly deed may cheer and help, the action mentioned in a daily paper recently, of a London County Councillor, may well deserve a place here. It was his duty, in common with the other Councillors, to visit the county asylums; and there he was struck with the ill-fitting garments supplied by the authorities to the male inmates. Inquiries elicited the fact that from time immemorial all coats, trousers, and waistcoats, as well as all under-garments, had been, and still were, made in two sizes only; consequently, in spite of the best endeavours on the part of the wearers, the men over the stock size found a difficulty in accommodating their manly proportions to clothes everywhere some sizes too small, whilst the under-sized men were just as inconvenienced by a superfluity of inches in the breadth, length, and girth of their habiliments. If we could conceive a crowd of, say, five hundred men, of all ages and sizes, compelled to get into suits, etc., made in two sizes only, for which not one had gone through the preliminary process of being measured or fitted, we may form some idea of the grotesque figures drawn up for the inspection of the Councillors. Yet the only too apparent discomfort and incongruity—to the sight of which perhaps they were but too

well accustomed—struck only one of these latter ! This true philanthropist remarked that the over and under stock-size men exhibited a shamefacedness in having to appear before the gentlemen in such ill-fitting garments, and he brought the matter to the notice of his colleagues. To their indifference on the subject he gave it as his opinion that insane men were not lost to a sense of all self-respect and feeling, simply because they were insane; and that he considered it an unnecessary addition to their already hard lot to so needlessly wound their *amour propre*. Thanks to his efforts the regulation, which would have been better honoured years ago in the breach than in the observance, was done away with, and a better took its place. Whether the clothing of the women was subject to the same regulation was not stated, nor would the ill-fitting garments in this case be so likely to be detected by a mere man. Such a thoughtful, kindly deed deserves to be recorded in letters of gold, and we cannot doubt that in a certain Book we wot of—the writers in which are pitying angels—that golden deed has found a worthy place.

CHAPTER II

RESTRAINT AND NON-RESTRAINT

In times of old the insane were treated with a humanity that shames our boasted modern civilization. One instance will suffice to prove the truth of my assertion. King David, when no other refuge was open to him, from the hot pursuit of his inveterate enemy Saul, found a secure and safe refuge among his bitterest enemies, the Philistines, by the simple subterfuge of feigning madness. The heathen of to-day treat their insane with a compassion unknown to us—their vaunted superiors. The Chinese, among many other peoples, could give us much-needed lessons in humanity in the care of their mentally afflicted.

With the exception, perhaps, of leprosy, no diseases have been treated legally and socially with such severity as those of the mind, during and since the Middle Ages; yet no ills that flesh is heir to call for greater intelligence, skill, and tact—from the subtlety of the diseases—on the part of doctors and attendants.

We are all familiar with the picture given us of Bethlehem, or Bedlam Hospital, London, say two

hundred years ago. We find that patients there were confined in cages, like wild animals; that they were heavily manacled, chained, shackled, bound with ropes, straps, etc., and treated as wild beasts, not as human beings.

“Compassion*,” says an eminent American authority, Charles W. Page, in a paper read at the State Board of Insanity Conference, State House, Boston, Mass., May 17, 1904, “for the afflicted insane had little, if any, weight in deciding what measures should be employed in their treatment; whilst a vague, mysterious horror, or fear of the disease, readily suggested to friends, or custodians, barbarous antagonism to its manifestations.”

Far be it from me to deny that great improvement and advance has been made in dealing with lunatics; but to bring present-day asylums abreast of present-day hospitals, the most drastic reform is urgently needed; a reform as comprehensive as that which has transformed the old Bedlam with its cages and their (supposed) demoniacal occupants, who closely resembled the man of whom we are told in the Gospel, that he, night and day, “was in the mountains cutting himself with stones, whom no man could tame,” to its present home-like, healthful appearance. What a comfort for the despised lunatic is this miracle of Our Lord! “I adjure thee, by God, that thou torment me not!” Did Our Saviour add to the suffering of this human soul in torment, as men and

women have done for these twenty centuries in this England of ours? Nay; the same healing power that opened the eyes of the sane blind, that restored life to the sane dead, was exercised for the restoration of this outcast maniac, and he was given back to his relatives, his friends, and his home. What a lesson for the sane, for the humanitarian, for the philanthropist, who spend their talents, time, and substance in ameliorating the conditions of life of the dumb creation (and rightly, too) in subjection to men of naturally brutal instincts; yet pass by on the other side in the case of the most helpless of their fellow-creatures, condemned to the life and deprivations of criminals; yet whose only crime is that they suffer from a disease which is prevalent enough, but little understood.

The law takes the responsibility of these afflicted beings upon itself, and then places them in asylums, where from the treatment they receive recovery is impossible; and this same law deprives them of the means of procuring intelligent treatment, or of making known their need of it. It is not too much to say that thousands of lunatics contract—from the nature of the life they are compelled *nolens volens* to lead, from the ill-treatment of brutal attendants, from the neglect and indifference of the medical authorities

—incurable diseases, from which they would never have suffered (I am myself one case in point) had they been permitted to safeguard their health themselves, and had not the law placed them where to do so is impossible.

To look for help from remedial legislation is hopeless. Help must come from the Public, who must insist on a rigid inspection of all asylums, public and private.

Were this done, were some fifty or a hundred intelligent lunatics, who have been through the mill, called before a Commission to give their experiences, the present state of affairs would be speedily reformed, and humane, curative, scientific treatment supersede the present cruel, incompetent, ignorant, positively injurious "system."

Dr. Page in his paper (from which I have already quoted) gives the following authenticated statement of the condition of lunatics in State and other asylums in Great Britain, France, and Germany, during the Eighteenth Century.

"During the French Revolution, that great, moral genius Philippe Pinel, was appointed superintendent of the Bicêtre, the great Paris asylum for incurable, insane men. When Pinel entered the building he was greeted by the yells and exclamations of three hundred maniacs, who mingled the clanking of their chains with the uproar of their voices. This horrible condition of things had existed indefinitely without

one recorded protest from political officials, church authorities, or friendly philanthropists. Public opinion had come to regard such conditions as inevitable, as they now do the present inhuman treatment, and yet we know to-day that the shocking features of that gloomy Paris prison-asylum were due entirely to ignorance, to "man's inhumanity to man." At that time, however, Pinel alone held such an opinion; and when he requested permission of the government to do away with the chains, iron cages, and brutal keepers, "he was generally regarded as a reckless visionary, almost, indeed, an insane man himself. Nevertheless, he removed the chains, at once, from some fifty men, and the others subsequently, without a resulting accident or untoward event. Owing no doubt, in part, to unsettled political conditions in France at that time, this progress in humanity was not widely known, or duly appreciated, until after the lapse of many years.

"Meanwhile, an English Quaker, William Tuke by name, becoming sorely distressed with the depleting and repressive methods to which the insane in the government asylums of Great Britain were subjected, founded at York, and at his own expense, a hospital for the insane, where these were treated as sick people, and where gentleness and patience would, under all conditions, be exercised towards them.

"This humane innovation in lunatic asylum practice attracted considerable attention in England, and

although his 'Retreat' was conducted without ostentation, but with the simple quiet methods which characterize Quakerism, it aroused intense hostility, and its methods were denounced and vilified, especially by those interested in the management of English asylums, in which insane inmates continued to be treated according to the rigorous code of the conservative British authorities.

"Chains, straps, strait waistcoats, threats, force, coercion, and isolation in cells held sway in practically all public asylums, while the York Retreat continued its gentle and most successful non-restraint ministrations to the mentally afflicted. No doubt theories and methods in many English asylums were in time modified by the influence of the York Retreat, but nowhere else were the efficient, advanced Quaker principles adopted as the prevailing moral tone and force of an English institution prior to 1838, when, at the Lincoln asylum, Dr. Gardiner Hill, seconded by Dr. Charlesworth, endeavoured to absolutely abolish mechanical restraint. But their convictions were considered too radical by the authorities above them, and as a consequence they lost their situations as asylum officers. Yet the time for a revolution in lunatic hospital management was ripe, and the requisite man with masterful endowments was at hand.

"In the following year, 1839, Dr. John Conolly, without previous experience in such work, assumed control of the asylum at Hanwell, which then

contained eight hundred patients. For some time this asylum had been managed on lines which were conspicuously mild for those days. In fact, it was deservedly considered the best managed asylum in England, and yet Dr. Conolly found forty patients subjected to mechanical restraint; and designed for such uses were about six hundred instruments of one kind and another, half being leg blocks, and handcuffs, with forty coercion chairs. All these he collected in one room, which he called the museum, and henceforth no patient in Hanwell was subjected to mechanical restraint. In 1844 Dr. Conolly wrote as follows: 'After five years' experience, I have no hesitation in recording my opinion, that with a well-constituted governing body, animated by philanthropy, directed by intelligence, and acting by means of proper officers, there is no asylum in the world in which all mechanical restraint may not be abolished, not only with safety, but with incalculable advantage.''' Surely such an enlightened philanthropist as Dr. Conolly deserves to be remembered for all time, and his words to be imperishably inscribed in the annals of our country.

"Dr. Conolly abolished restraint not simply because it was an inheritance from the prison *régime*, to which the insane were formerly (and in great measure are now) subjected, but more especially because it was the material embodiment of all prison policy—coercion. As an English authority has stated, 'What

he sought was not only to abolish tangible instruments of restraint, but to substitute the power of a superior mind, guided by unvarying kindness. He showed by reasoning, he proved by trial, and he enforced by all the high courage of his unvarying patience and his tender heart the great principle that the insane are best governed by a law of kindness, and that all coercion applied to them is not only unnecessary, but hurtful. The credit of first suggesting non-restraint does not belong to Dr. Conolly, but it has been well said that the credit of originality is often due, not so much to the man who first suggests a thing, as to him who suggests it in such a manner as to display its value; or not so much to him who sets an example worthy of imitation as to him whose example compels imitation by its worth. What Conolly did was not merely to abolish restraint and torture within the sphere of his personal control, but to render their continuance impossible within the limits of civilization. Under the influence of his example the fetter fell from the limbs of the lunatic in all English asylums. By example, precept, tongue, and pen, he laboured without ceasing in defence of the great principles involved; and he had the satisfaction of ultimately seeing the practice founded upon them, more or less closely copied in every asylum in England, and in many others located in various parts of Europe. He found the lunatic an object of dread and suspicious horror; he left him an object of

commiseration (except to his attendants) and kindness. He found insanity regarded as a disease of the mind, he left it recognised as a disease of the body. He found a madhouse a prison, and a place of torture without mercy; he left it a hospital for many and an asylum, in fact, as well as in name, for all inmates.

“This great work, immeasurable in its continued and ultimate effects, was accomplished only as the result of the most painstaking personal application to detail in his own wards, and a long-continued battle for mercy and justice. Opposition to his theory and practice—some of it honest doubting—but much of it ignorant, and bitter prejudice sprang up, and attacked him at all quarters. He met it first from his own country, from English asylum officials, and later from Continental critics. He met all opponents in the true Quaker spirit, and his intelligence, his courage, and his sincerity triumphed, as such principles always will, over error and ignorant prejudice. When his detractors could no longer maintain the long believed error, that for mechanical restraint some treatment, no better, perhaps more reprehensible, would have to be substituted, the assertion that Dr. Conolly’s patients were of a milder type than those to be found in other asylums was advanced. Then when non-restraint became the general working policy of England, Continental faultfinders asserted that English people were a more docile race than Frenchmen or

Germans. The same untenable assumption is often heard to-day in extenuation for the continual use of mechanical restraint in certain hospitals.

“The experience of officials from the time of Conolly—about fifty years—to the present day is invariably that where restraint is permitted the general spirit of the management breathes coercion, antagonism, and enforced submission. When non-restraint is the undeviating rule, tact, persuasion, and sympathy soften and mellow every act towards the inmates. The employment of mechanical restraint gives the attendants a wrong sense of their personal power over patients (how true this and the following sentence is, only those who, like myself, have experienced coercion, can testify), such a physical advantage that they instinctively incline to self-assertion, to issue peremptory commands, to use ill-considered, irritating speech; to give curt answers, to make threats, in short to intimidate all but the quietest patients. ‘Do thus, or thus, or you will be put in a strait-jacket, you will be secluded, you will be sent to the back wards!’ Having thus threatened a penalty, the average uninstructed attendant concludes that proper hospital discipline demands its infliction, unless the excited, frightened patient meekly capitulates; a result one could hardly expect from a sane person, much less with a deranged, apprehensive lunatic. When the non-restraint principle is adopted, attendants are under no temptation to utter such

threats, thus they are dispossessed of that which in the majority of cases occasions troublesome friction between themselves and the patient."

Dr. Page, who is the medical superintendent of Danvers Asylum, U.S.A., in one of his reports says: "I formerly permitted the use of restraining apparatus upon patients; endeavouring to limit its use to rare and exceptional cases, and to convince the attendants that restraint was seldom necessary, but every exception in favour of mechanical restraint seemed to weaken the courage and resolution of the attendants. Then, too, as long as attendants understood that straps and jackets could be employed as final measures, they relinquished mild efforts too quickly, and were inclined to assume a dictatorial, oppressive manner towards patients upon slight occasions; and this spirit of coercion as evinced by the attendant in his or her attitude towards the patient was, according to my observation, the starting-point of the trouble with refractory patients in the great majority of cases."

That these remarks are true and just, every intelligent, honest superintendent of asylums must admit; and speaking as a patient, from a most unhappy experience of coercion, I can unhesitatingly endorse every word written by Dr. Page on this subject; and not I alone, but every patient in Europe would, if asked, bear the same testimony to the injurious effects on patients and attendants, and on the doctors themselves, of a system of restraint.

Dr. Page continues: "Since I discarded restraint I have been responsible for the custody and treatment of more than six thousand insane persons. Among these were some difficult cases, notably a woman, a West Indian, who was transferred from another State institution because they could not 'manage' her. 'But you have had her in restraint,' I remarked. 'Oh, yes,' replied the nurse, 'she has been let out of restraint only two hours a day.' This patient was destructive, suicidal, and vicious. She remained in the Danvers hospital nearly four years, and was never restrained. She greatly improved, but as she was epileptic her ultimate recovery was hopeless. I must confess that this case was a severe tax mentally and physically upon officers and attendants, and the self-sacrificing care, the sympathy, and the patience exercised by the nurses, who accomplished such excellent results, deserve, as examples of moral heroism, public approbation, if not medals of honour."

Doctor Page further says with regard to seclusion of the insane, "only in exceptional cases can it be beneficial. If, as Conolly said, 'Restraint is neglect,' this is doubly true of seclusion. A patient should never be confined in the cells for longer than thirty minutes. Next to execution, solitary confinement is the severest doom that legal tribunals can pronounce upon hardened criminals. It is trying to the sane, how, then, can it be improving to a deranged man,

shut away from associations with human beings, incapable of understanding, or rather comprehending, the logic of the position, consumed by delusions, or burning with resentful indignation towards the authors of his imaginary wrongs?

“When Conolly was asked: ‘Can all the insane be managed without restraint, or commitment to cells,’ he invariably replied, ‘Yes, and if you are in earnest you will succeed.’ But Conolly *was* in earnest. He devoted a surprising amount of personal attention to each trying, difficult patient, visiting such by night and day, and watching the conduct of attendants with unceasing vigilance.”

Hall Caine in a book on the Isle of Man gives a graphic description of the condition of the insane, up to the beginning of the 19th century. It appears that insanity had been very prevalent in Manxland, from the custom of intermarrying, consequent upon the slight intercourse the islanders held with the outside world, and the few importations of fresh blood among them.

Almost every family had its victim; and these unfortunate creatures, both men and women, as there were no asylums on the island, were heavily chained and bound in an out-house; their care, such as it was, devolving upon the other members of the family. What a pitiful sight must the poor demented father, mother, or other relative, have presented, in the out-house, on a bed of straw on bitter nights, when the

freezing winds cut into the half-clothed body, chilling and freezing it, whilst the sane members of the family slept in their warm beds! Happily this state of things has been improved, and the Isle of Man has now its asylums, more or less well managed and administered, which offer, at least, protection from the cold to some of its afflicted inmates.

Mr. Beers says, in "A Mind that Found Itself," with regard to the cruelties practised upon victims of restraint in America :—

"English readers may not be familiar with the public correspondence into which 'Hard Cash' drew its author, Charles Reade. His letter of January 17th, 1870, in the *Pall Mall Gazette* shows how the ribs of insane patients could be and were broken by brutal keepers with such fiendish skill as even to leave no external evidence on the body of the victim; and that letter shows also how prevalent then were atrocities (the actual murder of several patients in the American asylums where the author was confined) of the kind I have been describing, and how easy it was (and still is) for their perpetrators to escape punishment.

"If I were to recall each instance of cruelty (major and petty) which I can recall, my chapter on abuse would soon become a book in itself. And if it were possible to put in book form the stories of the lives of persons who have suffered experiences such as mine, I firmly believe it would take several thousand feet of shelving in a Congressional Library to hold

this record of man's inhumanity to man. Fortunately no such collection of woe can ever be gathered. Read the few stories of this nature that exist, magnify the impression gained, and an approximation may be reached. Without question, during the past century hundreds of insane men and women have been murdered by their keepers. And many of these murders were as deliberate as any ever committed; for attendants frequently hate unto death certain of their troublesome charges."

What an indictment against a Christian country! And do not let us plume ourselves on the reflection that this happened in America; the same indictment can be made against England, and that even to-day. How true is it that there is a tendency in England to grow hysterical over imaginary evils, whilst real evils leave it unmoved! Gladstone aroused England to almost a state of frenzy by his description of the Bulgarian atrocities, and at that very hour men and women, his own compatriots, were being done to death in public and private asylums, and did he heed? No; the lunatic is not a factor in politics, therefore he may be slaughtered with impunity; who knows, or cares even if they knew? Certainly not our politicians, not our legislators, not our electors, nor our clergy, nor the man in the street, or any man or woman in the three Kingdoms.

Mr. Beers further says: "Though the days of dungeons, manacles, shackles, ropes, straps, and

chains have in the main passed, it should yet be borne in mind that our great hospitals, with their beautiful grounds, are too often but cloaks wherewith a well-intentioned but blind civilization still covers a hideous nakedness. This cruel and deceptive cloak must be torn off. That the public has long been deceived by appearances is not surprising. For even I, in walking casually through the wards of such an asylum, find it well-nigh impossible to realize that many of the inmates are subjected to even mild abuse. Even I, who have suffered the most exquisite torture from 'muffs' and strait-jackets, have, in my several tours of inspection at State hospitals, looked upon a patient so bound with a feeling rather akin to curiosity than sympathy. So innocent do these instruments of restraint appear, when one views a victim for the few moments it takes to pass him by, it is little wonder that a glib-tongued apologist for restraint may easily convince one that the bound patient is, in fact, better so. Nevertheless, he is not better so. The few seconds that the observer beholds him are but an infinitesimal fraction of the long hours, days, or weeks, that he must endure the embrace of what soon becomes an engine of torture. There is but one remedy for the evils attending the mechanical restraint of the insane, and that is its disuse.

"Though the universal adoption and continued use of non-restraint will contribute to the well-being, even happiness, of the inmates of our asylums, its use alone

cannot materially decrease the total number of insane persons (150,000 in Great Britain), except in so far as the resulting recoveries will more than off-set the average number of years a patient is likely to live in an institution where he is kindly and scientifically treated from the moment of his commitment. Of course, if in a supposedly humane age it is the policy of the public to treat the unfortunate insane harshly, even brutally, with the hope of killing some and cutting short the lives of others destined to live long under favourable conditions, restraint is the method of treatment to use, and the more cruel and repressive it is the easier will it be for some cold-blooded calculator to prove that by its means money has been saved the State. But it will be at the cost of killing many patients who might recover; and further, such an accountant in arriving at his heartless result would certainly have to disregard the economically sound law that it is cheaper for the State to spend any amount of money for the prevention and cure of insanity than it is to neglect those threatened or afflicted with it."

And this brings us to the consideration of remedial measures. Let us see what other countries have done in this direction, and we shall find that England and America are centuries behind the Continental States of Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Russia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and Belgium, and the Argentine Republic, Brazil, and

Japan, all of whom have for some time had attached to each University a psychiatric clinic under its own control; furthermore no physician in most of these countries may practise medicine until he has passed an examination in psychiatry—a subject crowded out of our medical curriculum! In Germany, where everything is done with a thoughtfulness that England might well imitate, a system of State-supported sanatoriums has long been in successful operation. “These institutions,” Mr. Beers remarks, “are not open to those afflicted with a developed mental disease. They are designed for the exclusive use of those *threatened* with insanity. The Germans engage in rescuing those threatened with insanity, because they have been wise enough to realize that it is cheaper to help the individual back to health than to let him break down completely, and live for years perhaps a burden to the State.” How applicable to England is the same author’s next paragraph!

“In the light of such embarrassing facts, it is indeed high time that the United States of America should prove itself the vauntedly progressive nation it is supposed to be, by taking hold of the neglected problem of insanity, and through its several legislatures bringing into existence Psychopathic Hospitals of the type in use in Munich. That the movement towards the erection of such model hospitals is already under way is a fact, and those who know the field predict that within two years a majority of the States

will be operating in institutions of the desired type, and that within eight years no State will be without at least one Psychopathic Hospital of its own."

And is England, the richest country for its size in the world, the leader in movements of philanthropy and humanity, to lag behind America and the countries I have named in its provisions for the care of its own insane? Archbishops, bishops, peers, legislators, philanthropists, humanitarians, and others met, not so very long ago, in London to protest against the cruelties practised by a foreign Power in far-away Congo. Had this country a right to interfere in cruelties practised by other nations when it permits atrocities scarcely less atrocious to be perpetrated behind the bolts and bars of its lunatic asylums? Physician, heal thyself! Before we dictate to other nations let us heal our own sores, let us protect our own defenceless, hapless brothers and sisters, here in our midst, from rapine and cruelty; they are even more helpless than the natives of the Congo State, for whom two Continents are concerned. Who advocates the cause of the insane? Who is allowed to do so? How can the public be reached, except through the Press? And this free (?) Press of England opens wide its doors to the ventilation of the woes of the black man in Congo, or anywhere else; but it closes them rigidly to the no less bitter cry of the refined, well-born Englishwoman, who suffers a degradation as deep, a martyrdom as cruel, as that enforced on any

African tribes from the white man's greed of gold. How long, how long is this wicked injustice to stalk unpunished, unreprieved through Christian England? How long are sufferers from mental diseases to be treated by doctors who know little or nothing about them, and then be packed off to asylums?

An incentive is held out to the general practitioner to get rid of patients he knows not how to treat, and so ignorant is the general public also in the matter of mental diseases that the doctor's bungling escapes detection. Why should our doctors not qualify in mental as well as in physical diseases, since they have to treat both? Surely if the sane in all other European countries require that a medical man shall give proof of his acquaintance with mental diseases before he treats them, why is a proof not required in England? Are English mental diseases different, and do they require only an elementary knowledge on the part of our doctors? I trow not. Then why in the name of common-sense do we not insist on medical examinations including mental diseases? If the mental sufferer were intelligently treated when he reached the asylum he might not have so much reason to complain of the doctor's ignorance in treating him before he got there; but the reverse is the case. To ignorance is now added cruelty, carelessness, indifference, neglect, and the obloquy attaching to the term lunatic. Often, too, it means death—the lunatic's best and only friend on

this earth—for such are the conditions of life in the asylum that to preserve his physical health is well-nigh impossible; and he who does quit his living grave carries with him into the world the seed of one or more mortal diseases, if he be not already stricken with them.

With regard to private lunatic asylums in America, which in common with those in England are run for personal gain, I will quote a passage from the 14th Annual Report (1901) of the State Commission in Lunacy of New York. It states:—

“The number of private licensed institutions is twenty-three; it is not desirable that this number be increased; a decrease would be welcomed.

“The Commission feels that there should be a more adequate *system of visitation of these private retreats*. An inspection twice a year by the medical member of the Commission is not sufficient. Some institutions are admirably conducted, whilst others do not reach the standard of the State hospitals in point of sanitary conditions and means of care and treatment of patients. In some of them patients are isolated for unconscionable periods, and restraint with muffs and camisoles is employed to an unreasonable degree. In certain of them bathing facilities are insufficient; in some the proportion of attendants is too small, and even in some of the best the quality of the nursing leaves much to be desired.”

Dr. M. Allen Starr then cites five cases of ill-

treatment in private American asylums which came under his personal observation as evidence of the low standard of nursing existing in some of the private institutions. In one case a lady, who paid six pounds per week, was found locked in a room with an ignorant but good-natured Irish girl, who acknowledged that she had entered the asylum the week before, and had never done any nursing previously. A gentleman was placed in the charge of a rough, dirty Swede, who never before had acted as nurse. The man's habits were filthy, and the gentleman, who paid fifty dollars per week, offered in addition twenty dollars for the board of his own attendant, who had taken him to the asylum, but this offer was declined. He was compelled to spend the twenty-four hours of every day and night with this foreign dirty creature, who terrorised him."

Let it not be thought that these are exceptional cases. I could give hundreds instead of these two, all fully authenticated; and let us not plume ourselves on the fact that these cases occurred in America. Thousands of identically similar cases could be found amongst the many private asylums in England to-day, and *every word* quoted from the Report applies to English asylums, as I can myself from an unhappy experience testify. Only those who have been immured behind the bolts and bars of asylums can form an idea of the bitter need for "a more adequate system" of inspection.

There is an agitation on foot for the inspection of convents, but inspect lunatic asylums first, I say, and so would you, my reader, if you had ever been in one. I quite agree with the inspection of convents, but I say that the inmates of asylums are in far greater need of protection from those who have the charge of them than are the nuns in a convent, who enter those institutions in their senses, knowing what to expect, and what they renounce; not so the lunatic. He is compelled by the law to enter his living grave, and compelled to stay there, nor can he appeal to any one for protection; he is legally dead; the law that forced him into the asylum offers him no aid, no redress, no help; it just leaves him to his fate—the saddest, the most pitiful on this earth.

CHAPTER III

HOW I WAS MADE A LUNATIC

The manufacture of an artificial lunatic is not a difficult process, given a subject in a thoroughly exhausted physical condition, whose mental powers have been overwrought by long-continued worry and brain and physical labour out of all proportion to the subject's strength of body. Starve, beat, bruise, and otherwise ill-use in every possible way this same subject. Confine him or her to one room, and last but not least drug him unmercifully, especially if, like myself, this subject has never taken alcohol, has refrained all his life from stimulants of any sort, from drugs, and for at least ten years from tea or coffee. The result will be a fully-fledged lunatic, although the subject may be as sane as ever in his or her life when not under the influence of morphia, paraldehyde, and half a dozen other horrible drugs, with which I was ignorantly and I say wickedly drenched and saturated.

Now I shall always maintain that I was never insane. I was overworked and overwrought, and I grant that I had lost the proportion of things, which led me to take an exaggerated view of recent occurrences,

and that for a time, which did not exceed one month, I suffered from simple mental depression, but this ought not to have sufficed to send me to an asylum. What I needed at this critical period was intelligent medical treatment, and good, nourishing, stimulating food. What I got was the very opposite of what I required. The doctor who treated me ordered me a milk diet, which consisted of one pint of milk in twenty-four hours; the result was, of course, starvation, and almost death. Weakness—for I was reduced to the very lowest ebb—and starvation naturally produced delirium, and then I was unmercifully drugged, with the result that for at least a month I had scarcely more than five minutes' consciousness, or clearness, at a time. I was treated by the woman who nursed me with the utmost barbarity. I was beaten, choked, strapped down, sat upon, knelt upon, and subjected to every imaginable torture this fiend—. I can call her nothing else—thought fit to inflict on my wasted, emaciated body, which at the end of five weeks was a mass of bruises and contusions, too many to be counted, all of which this woman insisted were self-inflicted! I can most solemnly and truthfully assert that not one of these was my handiwork. I have, all my life, shrunk from physical pain, and am the last person to inflict it on myself. But my word, my assertions, are not believed. I was, at the end of the five weeks, certified—most cruelly and unjustly—a lunatic, therefore I have no redress for the ill-

treatment I received, also, which is more important, I have no witnesses. My friends were rigidly excluded, on the excuse that I was too ill to see them; yet, when under the influence of drugs, I was exhibited to this woman's friends in order that they might prove, if necessary, my insanity. I have not one witness who could give evidence in proof of the well-founded charges I make, whilst the woman who tortured me has at least a dozen to support her untrue statements; so unfortunately true is it that a patient suffering from the very mildest form of mental disease is at once condemned as incapable of making a true statement, or of speaking the truth. Hence nurses of the insane and the heads of nursing homes have all the advantage on their side. A strong weapon is thus placed in their hands, which they do not hesitate to use; *they* have only to contradict charges of the grossest cruelty, and *they* are believed, whilst their victim is discredited, and his charge set down to his delusions, or to that malice which is supposed to be an accompaniment of insanity.

In order that my position, and how I was made a lunatic, may be fully understood, I must give some personal particulars of my family and myself. I am a single woman of middle age, and began my life's work—private teaching—when but fifteen years of age, and I consistently followed this occupation through the next four decades, until I was taken ill in December, 1907. As I loved my work, I had

always hoped to die in harness, in the home that I had made and maintained entirely by the work of head and hands; for, although I had all my life practised (from necessity more than inclination) a rigid personal economy, and wasted neither my time nor substance, I rarely had at the end of the year anything to put by for old age, after all expenses had been met. Teaching is the least lucrative of callings, although it is an exacting and trying one, even when one has a vocation for it, as in my own case.

As my father was unfortunate in money matters, very little could be spared from the family exchequer for the education of his daughters. What little there was, was spent on the sons; so that I may say I owed my education to my own indefatigable efforts to acquire it.

My youth, therefore, was a strenuous one, and pleasure—as the young people of to-day interpret the word—found no place in it. When in my father's house, and not employed in teaching, practising, or studying, needlework and various household duties filled my hands; for the eldest girl in a large family, where means are limited, and the mother a semi-invalid, must needs find constant occupation.

Throughout my childhood and girlhood I suffered from delicate health. At twelve I contracted small-pox, which happily was not a very serious attack, although I was ill for two months. At school I had scarlet fever, and at nineteen measles very severely.

My health, after my return from Germany, improved considerably, and I had no serious illness until 1889, when I nearly lost my life through severe hæmorrhage of the stomach, brought on by overwork and strain, also by family and financial worries and troubles. I did not recover my digestive powers—if ever I have recovered them—for at least seven years, yet throughout that time I got through, from sheer force of will, more work than many two able-bodied healthy women of my age.

The year 1907-8 was the most fateful of my life. My income suddenly decreased—from no fault of my own—yet my expenses, which were very heavy, had to be met. I had for years had troubles in my family, and had paid the debts of others, denying myself the rest and relaxation I needed to do so.

With money worries I have been familiar from my earliest years. Had my income not suddenly dropped in 1907 this book would not have been written, for I should be still in my home, carrying on my life's work. In order to lessen my heavy expenses I undertook far more work than I had the physical strength, although I had the will, to accomplish; and the result—a bad break-down—was inevitable. Could I but have kept well, I have no doubt that my pecuniary position would have improved. I had avoided debt all my life, as I should the plague, consequently I had ample funds to meet all liabilities. Now, however, in consequence of my illness I am saddled with heavy

debts I cannot hope at my age, and with my disadvantages, to pay from any future earnings; for the fact that I have been in an asylum—even although I may prove that I was never insane—is quite sufficient to prevent my obtaining any further employment.

To account for what happened it will be necessary to explain that one of my sisters had for many years subjected me to bitter persecution, arising solely from jealousy, envy, and malice. On my mother's death, this jealousy, restrained till then, burst forth in all its pent-up fury on my innocent head; for I had strangely enough been quite unconscious of my sisters' feelings towards me, or I should rather say of the depth of those feelings, for as a straw shows the direction in which the wind blows I could not but feel deeply hurt on many occasions, when my sister purposely and maliciously misconstrued a perhaps thoughtless speech, a quite innocent motive or action. For years she had endeavoured, with a zeal worthy a better cause, to poison the minds of relatives and friends against me, and as human nature is ever prone to believe the worst, she in some cases succeeded in alienating those who had known and trusted me for years. I have, however, the—to me—great satisfaction of knowing that not by one act or deed of mine have I injured her. On the contrary, I have done my utmost throughout my life to help her, and have rendered her very considerable assistance on any and every occasion when she required it. Then when

there was no one to restrain her, I was subjected to such bitter persecution that in order to secure the peace of mind necessary for my health and to carry on my arduous work, I resolved to cut myself off from all but business communications with this sister, who had, at my cordial invitation, on my mother's death, entered my house, and as a reward rendered my life an intolerable burden by usurping my place, and treating me as an interloper. I therefore took a house in the town where I had lived and worked for twenty-five years.

That I remained in the same town was a great offence in my sister's eyes. Her object throughout had been to drive me from the home to which she knew I so tenaciously clung, and from the town where my refusal to hold any communication with her was not unnaturally the subject of comment among those who knew us. But I had no wish to sever the connections which bound me to the place where I had laboured so long; besides, I could only do so by making financial sacrifices I did not feel justified in making, even for the boon of a quiet life, free from continual back-biting, strife, envy, and jealousy. That I would hold no communication with my sister annoyed her exceedingly, but as I considered our family jars uninteresting to relatives and friends, and as I never cared to make my sister's defection the subject of conversation with all and sundry, I rarely mentioned the subject, and merely intimated that I found it necessary

for my peace of mind to restrict my intercourse with my sister; but she did not consider herself bound to a similar reticence, and loudly inveighed against me at every opportunity, twisting and turning my most innocent speeches and actions, and giving them a construction utterly foreign from anything I intended. Her efforts to blacken my character, and to rob me of the fruits of my labour, succeeded only in part. The friendships I valued I retained, those I lost were not worth the keeping. Several years passed thus, in hard work, and I considered myself lucky if no more than fourteen hours made up my working day, thankful for my quiet home, and that I earned sufficient to meet expenses.

As the Christmas holidays of the year 1907 were approaching I resolved to close my house, which would enable me to take a much-needed rest, for at least a fortnight, and as the servants left several days before I did I was during the interval quite alone in my house—save for the companionship of my dog. But this was no new experience. I had often slept in my house for a fortnight at the time, quite alone, for I am not nervous or timid. I busied myself during this time with my correspondence, accounts, etc.; dined every day at a restaurant; saw several friends who called, and except that I felt thoroughly exhausted and overdone, was in every way my normal self. So unable did I feel to undertake the shutting-up of my house, the necessary packing, and the journey,

that had it been any other season than Christmas, I should not have left my home, but have spent the holiday quietly there. Feeling that I must have some human companionship at the festive season, for which I generally received some half-dozen invitations, I left the day before Christmas to visit a distant relative, whose unvarying kindness and sympathy, with that of his best of wives, had often cheered me when smarting under my sister's unjust and cruel insinuations, and to these relatives I feel that I owe a deep debt of gratitude for the many acts of kindness they have shown me before and since I left the asylum. From my sisters I have received only contumely and scorn, from my brother—whose debts I have on more than one occasion paid—cruel abuse and withering sarcasm, but from these dear friends the deepest and the most practical sympathy and assistance.

The journey was not a long one, and I arrived safely at my relatives' house, in every respect my normal self, but when I had been two days there I began to feel an overwhelming sense of my wrongdoing. I think the fact that my sister had so unjustly accused me of all sorts of mean actions, entirely foreign to my nature, now led me, when my exhausted body re-acted on my mind, to accuse myself of these very things which I had in the past so indignantly repudiated and denied. I felt convinced that I had rendered myself liable to arrest, and feared that my house was in the hands of the police, consequently I

felt most anxious to return to it. I knew, too, that I was ill, that my relatives were in delicate health, and that as an invalid sister was already in the house I could not conscientiously remain any longer, and become an additional care; therefore I insisted on going home, although my kind hosts begged me to remain with them. Had I but done so I should never have gone to an asylum. As a proof that I required nourishing, stimulating food, and that when tone had been restored to my exhausted body my mind would have cleared itself of the clouds troubling it, no sooner had I taken some very strong beef-tea than all the mists gathering round my brain cleared away; I lost the feeling of remorse, and the delusion that the police were in possession of my house. But these returned when the effect of the stimulant had left me, and, accompanied by my relative, who braved the cold of an Arctic day, I returned to an empty, fireless house, in dread of arrest throughout the journey, and shuddering at the sight of a policeman; astonishment that he passed me unnoticed mingling with relief that I was still at large, and haunted by the conviction that my arrest was but deferred. I was very considerably relieved to find that my house had not been entered during my absence.

I was certainly not in a fit state to be left alone, but I dreaded the advent of my sisters quite as much as the police, and when my relative—who quite naturally considered my sisters the proper persons to be

near me—acquainted me with his intention of going to their house—for two of my sisters now lived together—I besought him not to inform them of my illness; for the sister, from whom I had silently borne so much, was the last person I desired to see at this time. Her presence, since she had caused me so much needless and such bitter pain, produced an irritating effect on me, so much so that the very fall of her foot grated on my sensitive nerves. When exhausted physically and suffering mentally, I felt I could not bear this unsympathetic, this antagonistic personality near me, nor bear her gibes and sneers. I knew that to see me ill, and threatened with pecuniary difficulties, and the loss of my home, would afford her the greatest satisfaction. I felt, too, that if she could manage it, my utter ruin would be effected, and how justified were my forebodings subsequent events clearly proved. However, my relative was deaf to my entreaties—he has since expressed his deep regret for disregarding my wishes—and my sisters were fetched.

They seemed at first quite unable to realize that I could be suffering mentally, for I had throughout my life been remarkable for my self-control, a strong will, and sound judgment. I was naturally of a happy nature, endowed with a keen sense of the ridiculous; and although I had, when suffering under the many trials and difficulties that beset my path in life, given way for a time to despondency quite at

variance with my natural gaiety of character, I had, however, always quickly recovered my normal cheerfulness, and am thoroughly convinced that my ills were of the body only. Indeed, medical science has established the fact that mental diseases in the majority of cases are the result of disease of some other organ than the brain, which is merely disturbed in its functions. I, however, was free from organic disease, unless a feeble and weakened digestion, the result of overstrain and overwork, might be classed under that head. The organic diseases from which I now suffer are the direct consequences of the neglect and unnecessary exposure to cold to which I was subjected when unable to protect myself, and not allowed to take that care I have always bestowed on my health, knowing it to be my most valuable asset.

Could I have remained in my own house, and there have given my overworked and tired body the rest it needed, and been fed with the nourishing and stimulating food I required, I should, at the outside, have recovered my bodily health and my mental balance in a fortnight. This my rapid improvement at the asylum proved. When I was taken there I was as free from mental disease as ever in my life. I was certainly dazed with drugs, and dying of starvation, but not insane, although two doctors attested to my insanity in the usual course.

My sisters arranged for a woman—a stranger to me—to remain with me on my return, and I, knowing

that every detail of my household arrangements and management would come under the censorious condemnation of my sisters, who had systematically belittled me and my work for years, and knowing, too, that my house was not as spotlessly clean as it had ever been my aim to keep it, I, feeling ill as I was, immediately set to work to remedy as far as strength permitted the defects of the servants. I also looked through my correspondence and bills, not that there was anything to hide, but I did not wish my sister to pry, as I knew she would do, into every small matter, and exaggerate it, if she found but the smallest ground for blame. My correspondence had been a large one, and the accumulations of years could not be looked over in a few hours. However, I did my best, and burned many useless papers, a work I had often contemplated doing, but had never been able to find a suitable time, or the time in fact. Because I burned these quite useless things, my sisters found a reason for considering me destructive, as are the insane frequently. For every article I consigned to the flames I can give a good reason for my action, and as I have always been blest with an excellent memory, could now if necessary write a list of everything I burned. I was thus busily occupied from the Saturday of my return until I left my home on the following Monday. Up till the moment of leaving I wrote business and other letters, as usual, and, with the exception that I charged myself with

having done things which were utterly foreign to my principles I was my normal self.

As I could not take the rest I needed in my own house, the doctor whom my sisters called in, and who had never previously attended me, suggested that I should enter a nursing home, and my sister found one not ten minutes' walk from my house. The person who kept this home was a stranger to me, but not to my sister. Now the latter had always boasted that should I ever fall ill, her one endeavour would be to prove to me that she wished me well by nursing me back to health. Here now was her opportunity, but I knew her too well to expect for one moment that she would seize it. Yet she ought to have been in the best position to do so. She had studied massage, and the various latter-day methods of cure for nervous diseases. She received patients into her house for the Weir-Mitchell and other systems, but she could not receive her sister; *she* was consigned to the care of a stranger, and one, moreover, who proved a very fiend in devising every kind of diabolical suffering it was possible to inflict on a human creature, rendered helpless by her neglect, and so weak from want of food that she was unable to defend herself from the cruelty of a strong, powerful woman.

But I had already put my sister's vaunted "Christian spirit" to the proof, and when tested it proved non-existent. Some six years previously, as I stepped off the pavement to oblige a perambulator,

its occupant, and the person in charge of both, a woman bicyclist going quickly, charged violently into me from behind, knocking me down, and seriously injuring a ligament of my right foot. I was then in lodgings not half a mile from my sister's house, having for the summer holidays taken charge of three young children. Moreover, during these same holidays, I was removing to another house, and had, in order to resume my work, to be established in my new residence in a month at the latest. This was quite an undertaking with sound limbs, but with my injured foot it became an ordeal. The doctor who examined the injury comforted me with the assurance that had I broken my ankle he could have mended it in six weeks, but it was impossible to say when I should recover the use of my foot. It was in fact four months before I walked with the aid of sticks, and quite eight before I walked comfortably. My sisters were informed of my mishap, but no offer of help came from either of them, nor did they even once inquire for me, or send a message of regret.

So, although it may have been with some disappointment, it was with no surprise that I heard my sister remark to the woman she brought to be with me, "Miss Hamilcar must go into a Home; she cannot, of course, remain here without servants, and we cannot have her in our house." Yet she could take the stranger! However, it was doubtless as well that I fought for my life and reason, and recovered both

without her aid. I have been many times since my recovery reminded by my sisters of the great obligation I am under to them for the immense services they rendered me at this time; I, however, can only reproach them as the cause of my suffering and consignment to an asylum; for had they seen that I received the care and the food I required, and that I was properly attended to, in that, to me, fatal Home, there would be now no need for me to record these experiences.

I shall always maintain that my sisters knew of the cruelties practised upon me by that awful woman; and that in order to be revenged upon me, and to complete my ruin, they acquiesced in, if they did not suggest, the barbarous treatment, and did all in their power to facilitate and hasten my removal to the asylum. They could not possibly have seen me without being aware of the ill-treatment I received; and I know from the gibes and taunts which they have heaped upon me since my discharge that sending me to the asylum was the crowning glory of the relentless persecution of the elder of the two, and that it affords her the greatest satisfaction and delight.

I walked into that fatal "Home" with a firm step, in the full possession of my senses, my only lapse from normality being the ideas, or delusions, I have named. In five weeks I was carried out of it to the asylum, dying of inanition, unable to stand, my arms trembling, my hands shaking like any confirmed

victim of alcoholism; my emaciated body a mass of livid weals, bruises, and contusions. A ghastly caricature of my former self I must have looked with my eyes starting from my head from fear of fresh tortures; my temples standing out in high relief from my hollow and shrunken cheeks; my hair shorn from my head, my teeth removed—I possess no natural ones—my weight reduced from over eight to six stone (I am five feet four in height, but have never weighed more than eight and a half stones); dazed from the merciless drugging, yet clear in my mind; my soul filled with indignation at the treatment I had received, yet so weak that I could give but the faintest expression to my indignation. When, for instance, the woman and one of the women she had engaged to assist her in torturing me, sat on either side of me in the cab, pinning me down by my cloak, in order to give the impression that I was “violent,” whereas I was perfectly passive, I tried to express my annoyance and the discomfort they caused me, but so drugged was I that I could only faintly murmur my disapprobation. A black motor veil covered my head, and certainly had I been the doctor of the asylum I should have concluded—as he did, judging from appearances—that a fully developed and dangerous lunatic had been brought to him. But appearances are deceitful, and everything had been done to secure for me the very severest possible treatment. No tearing, raving maniac ever took to his living grave

a blacker record than did I. Yet I was physically too weak to resist, even if I had felt the inclination; thankful only to escape from the tortures that cruel woman and her assistants had inflicted on me. I spoke rationally, and knew instinctively, although I had not been told, that I was entering an asylum, of which, in common with most people, I had the greatest horror; but even this was a relief, for it separated me from my tormentors. Alas! I had but exchanged my surroundings; of the ill-treatment I was quickly to discover there was enough and to spare in the asylum also.

What happened to me in this truly mis-called "Home" I must relate in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

HOW I WAS MADE A LUNATIC (CONTINUED)

I returned to my home on the Saturday following Christmas Day, and the next Monday evening, about eight o'clock, entered the "Home" that was to prove so fatal to me.

The woman who conducted the "Home," and whose ministrations with those of the women she engaged later to assist her in torturing me, had reduced me to the condition I have described, received me, and conducted me at once to a bedroom. I was very tired, for I had been ceaselessly employed since my return, and I was thankful to rest my exhausted body and overwrought senses. My sister accompanied me to the house, which was only a very short distance from my own, and what directions she gave this woman privately I do not know; but I presume that she advised her to remove my clothes and other belongings from my room. On seeing her do this, I inquired why she did so, and asked that they might be brought back, as I intended going the next day to my house; in fact, the one inducement that led me to enter this "Home" was that it was so near my house. I could easily visit it, get it cleaned, and prepare everything as usual for commencing my work again after the expiration of the holidays. I argued that a fortnight's complete rest would set me completely to rights, and

so it would, or have gone some way towards doing so, had I only received the food and treatment for which I was charged—I found later, very highly indeed—but these were cruelly denied me.

When I had in vain requested the woman to restore my clothes, I fell asleep with a sad foreboding of evil, for I felt convinced that I had made a great mistake in coming to this house, but wearied as I was, fatigue caused me to soon lose consciousness and forgetfulness in sleep. Now, never in my life have I suffered from insomnia, and up to the time I left my house I had enjoyed at least six hours' sound sleep nightly, but from the time I entered the "Home" I suffered from sleeplessness, caused by want of food, and the merciless drugging to which I was subjected. True, I had always rigidly excluded artificial light from my room, as that and that only prevented my sleeping. But if I lay down during any time of the day, or even seated myself in a comfortable chair, I could, if I permitted myself to do so, fall into a sound sleep—the light of day notwithstanding; therefore, exhausted as I was, my tired body would have found a natural rest, and my nerves have been soothed and healed had I been allowed to sleep. The woman insisted on putting a light in my room, and this excited my overwrought brain, and produced insomnia. Then the doctor most ignorantly and unfortunately, instead of ordering me a nourishing and stimulating diet, which would have

fed my body and restored the blood that was lacking to my brain—for I was undoubtedly suffering from anæmia of that organ—removed my artificial teeth, without which I could not masticate even soft bread, and ordered me a diet of milk only. The woman gladly acquiesced in this, to her, profitable *régime*, and a pint of milk in twenty-four hours was all I received in the way of food, the excuse made by the woman being that I refused to take more; but I was not allowed to have more.

Was it surprising that I became delirious from starvation and weakness, and that I daily grew worse? That I lost twenty-five pounds weight in five weeks is a clear proof that I did not receive the nourishment I required; the fact that I gained eleven pounds during the first three weeks of my sojourn in the asylum—where the food was the coarsest I had ever seen, and most unsuited to me—is another proof that I was starved in the “Home.” By what miracle did I, who the woman declared refused all food, recover my appetite and express a desire for a more varied diet, in the space of twenty-four hours? Why did I refuse food in the “Home,” yet demand it as soon as I had the chance in the asylum?

And here I must remark, that although the asylum as I saw it is a disgrace to our boasted Christianity, humanity, and civilization, yet there I was not drugged. The doctor cleared my system of the

excessive drugging to which I had been so wickedly and cruelly subjected, and so restored me to the full possession of my faculties and senses. Gladly would I have eaten food in the "Home," as I did in the asylum, but the opportunity was denied me. I naturally should—had I been in the best of health—have missed the plain, but carefully chosen, well-cooked food, to which all my life I had been accustomed, but in the state of utter exhaustion in which I was, not only were my mental powers completely unhinged, but my life was endangered, and my recovery rendered almost impossible by the want of the food I so greatly needed. Had I remained another week in that awful "Home" I should most certainly have died from inanition, and there can be no manner of doubt that my removal saved my life.

Now I am not learned in psychology or psychiatry, nor have I studied mental science or the anatomy or pathology of the nervous system. Research in any one of these departments of medicine has, for very good and sufficient reasons, never occupied my time nor attention; but I will endeavour to give as clear and lucid a description of my symptoms at this time as in my power lies, which I hope the layman may understand, if it may prove too unscientific for the comprehension of any medical man who may read these pages.

I had for some weeks previously to Christmas been very despondent, and the future loomed blackly

before me. The fear of losing my home, to which I clung with a tenacity I find it difficult to describe, haunted me incessantly, but I had no delusions, and the thought that had I but been intelligently treated by the doctor who attended me, and but nursed back to health and strength as I ought to have been in the "Home," I should now be in my own house, occupied as I have been all my life, instead of being a homeless wanderer, ruined in pocket and health, is most bitter to me. From the Christmas Day I began to take a most disparaging view of myself and my possessions. My dresses seemed to me veritable rags; nothing that my wardrobe contained appeared to be of the slightest value, and only awakened a feeling of contempt as I looked at them. I also exaggerated any trifling error I had ever committed, until I really felt I deserved imprisonment; and the extreme cold from which I suffered in the "Home," to the shame of the woman who made an exorbitant charge for a fire in my room which I did not get, and the hunger I felt, I took to be the just punishment of my hideous crimes. Yet I had committed none of the enormities with which I charged myself.

I had, as it were, lost the proportion of things; my mind was out of joint, and I was physically too exhausted to right it myself, or to reason myself into a saner condition. When this phase first came on at my relative's house, my limbs shook as with a palsy, and seemed to refuse to support the weight of

my body. My sleep was broken, and I muttered to myself, "Oh, what have I done—what have I done?" Yet I was able to join in the conversation of my hosts, and to interest myself in things that occurred around me.

As an instance of the distorted view I took when first I went to the "Home" of past events, how I twisted the most innocent of actions into subjects for the deepest remorse, I must explain that a year previously the little daughter of a friend had undergone, in my house, an operation for adenoids. I now became obsessed with the conviction that this operation was a sham one, and I suffered the most agonizing remorse for my share in it. I dreaded to ask the doctor attending me, who had performed the operation, if this were so, for I feared condign punishment would follow his confirmation of my fears. After days of doubting and suffering for my dishonourable part in the sham operation, finding the doctor standing at my bedside on awakening from a drugged period of unconsciousness, or sleep, I cannot now distinguish one from the other, I implored him to tell me the truth: was the operation only a sham, or had it been a real one? The doctor assured me that it was very real indeed, and I accepted his assurance, and suffered no further remorse on that matter.

I had gone some months previously with a friend to arrange for her young son to enter a college, and I endured many hours of dreadful remorse, because

I feared my many iniquities would prevent the boy's admission. The doctor who was now attending me knew the boy, and I, after a lengthy deliberation, summoned up the courage to ask him if I had been the cause of the boy's rejection. Again I was assured that his admission was settled, and that my imaginary sins had not in any way prejudiced the head-master. The relief of this assurance was unbounded, and I once more accepted the doctor's statement as correct, and ceased to be remorseful on that score.

Finding paper and pencil in my bedroom, placed there, I believe, by my sister's orders, the idea took possession of me that being such a dreadful criminal I ought to make a full confession of all my enormities, as is the custom of those sentenced to death. So as the light in my room precluded sleep, I poured forth my burdened soul in confession of sins of commission and omission, which I should have no difficulty in proving were as imaginary as the sham operation. Of this confession my sister took, and retains, possession. She has many times since I left the asylum referred to it as a conclusive proof of my natural depravity, and of the correct estimate she—being wiser than her generation—was enabled by means of her superior wisdom, to form of my character. As a gauge of my mental state at this time, this document may prove of interest to the psychologist. It certainly would prove the exceeding depth of my

self-disparagement and self-abasement, for I did not spare myself, but with an overwhelming sense of my extreme wickedness "confessed" to breaches of nearly all the Commandments. Indeed, I remember being puzzled in my dreams about the number of these, which I felt convinced was twelve, consequently my sins increased in proportion to the number of the Commandments, and the sum total was a very high one indeed.

This is, I believe, one of the symptoms of simple mental depression, caused generally by extreme exhaustion of the physical powers, and yielding more readily to wise and intelligent treatment than any other form of mental abnormality, and I must again emphasize the fact that my committal to an asylum was the direct consequence of the doctor's mistaken diagnosis, to his error in putting me on a milk diet and calmly allowing me to starve on it, to the extreme use of drugs, which the woman administered without as well as with the doctor's knowledge, and to the personal violence to which she so cruelly subjected me. All these factors combined to render me so weak and so dazed that I was unable to articulate, and to give voice to the indignation I felt, or to complain coherently to the doctor of the personal violence inflicted on me in my weak state by the woman and her assistants.

I do not know how many times I was visited by my sisters and the doctor in those awful five weeks,

but I do know that all my friends were rigidly excluded, and that I can recollect seeing the former and the doctor only a few times. When I complained to my sisters—which I did in the first letter I was permitted to write in the asylum, a week after I was admitted—of the abominable treatment I had received at the hands of the woman, they wrote assuring me that the ill-treatment was a delusion (so easy is it in the case of the mentally afflicted to put all complaints of ill-usage down to “delusions,” and so comfortable to those who inflict the injury, for they know they will be believed, whilst their victims will be discredited) on my part, and that the woman had been most kind and attentive to me! That they could speak from personal observation, as they had seen me every day. On the other hand, a friend wrote me that she had been refused admittance to my room, and given by the woman, as a reason for this refusal, an assurance that my sisters had not been allowed to see me for more than a fortnight! And as so very many statements made by my sisters then and afterwards proved to be utterly untrue, I believe the woman’s statement to my friend in spite of their repeated denials of its truth. Moreover, my wasted, emaciated, bruised, and livid body, as well as my shorn head, bore witness to the neglect and to the personal violence to which I was subjected.

The woman, however, convinced my sisters, who naturally were only too eager to be convinced, that

I had inflicted all these bruises on myself. Never was a greater untruth spoken. I bear physical pain very badly, all my life I have shrunk from it, and to have a tooth extracted or stopped has caused me for weeks before the event a hundred times more suffering than the actual pain I endured at the time. Besides, I was too weak to have the strength to inflict such injuries. I lacked the physical strength necessary to strike a blow that would produce a bruise, and again, if I had covered the whole surface of my body with bruises so numerous that the matron of the asylum gave up the task of counting after she had reached considerably over a hundred, why did I not continue so to treat myself after my admittance to the asylum? Instead of doing so I complained bitterly to doctors, attendants, matron, and patients, on the first opportunity, of the barbarity of the woman's treatment, and I entreated each of these not to beat or to ill-use me. Strange that I should do this if I had not previously been beaten and cruelly treated! Indeed, fear of further ill-treatment—well grounded from the experiences of my first and subsequent nights at the asylum—effectually banished sleep from my eyes for nine nights, although I was so overpoweringly sleepy that only the awful dread of further ill-treatment prevented me from sleeping straight through several days and nights.

And now I must digress a little, and ask if a mental patient has not the same right to sleep as a sane

patient? In all mental diseases natural sleep is the first and finest healer; ought not, then, the mentally afflicted to have secured to them the benefit of this healing? Ought not "asylum treatment"—especially where this is paid dearly for—to secure for each patient, who could sleep, a sound, undisturbed, natural night's rest? Remember that a patient in an asylum—whether public or private—has no power to remedy evils, no power to alter or to arrange anything whatsoever concerning himself personally.

He is fed, doctored, treated, and clothed (in public asylums) *en masse*, never as a unit, except when he is singled out for some special ill-treatment by the attendants; therefore, that individually he might require sleep is quite the last thing that doctors and attendants take into consideration, nor do they concern themselves to secure it for him. Wiser far than twentieth century mind-healers (?) were the friends of Christian in the "Pilgrim's Progress," who, when they came to the conclusion that "some frenzy distemper had got into his (Christian's) head, with all haste they got him to bed, hoping that *sleep might settle his brains.*" Not so the present-day guardians of the insane; it would seem that these do all in their power to prevent their victims' brains from "settling" by means of natural sleep. With regard to Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep, I feel constrained to quote here Sancho Panza's panegyric, so applicable is it to the hapless and helpless inmates

of our asylums, public and private. "While I am asleep," says Sancho, "I feel neither hope nor despair; I am free from pain, and insensible to glory; it covers a man all over, thoughts and all like a cloak; 'tis meat for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, heat for the cold, and cold for the hot. 'Tis the current coin that purchases all the pleasures of the world cheap, and the balance that sets the King and the shepherd, the fool and the wise man, even." And this same current coin, the birthright of all, is denied only to the insane! The blackest criminal may wrap around him the cloak of sleep (unhindered and undisturbed) for hours together, but the mental patient, whose only crime is the form of his disease, is denied the very thing he most requires for the healing of that disease. Ah! in many ways a prison is a more desirable dwelling-place than an asylum! Again I ask, ought this to be so?

An inmate of one of our large public asylums assured me that whilst craving sleep, and sorely needing it, the utmost amount of this natural blessing she was able to obtain during the twelve interminably weary months of her first year was one hour in the twenty-four! Because, although a quiet patient, and able to sleep eight to ten hours, she was placed in a ward with a number of noisy, wakeful cases, and sleep under such circumstances, except for a few minutes at the time, was impossible. Could a sane man have retained his sanity under such conditions?

That poor woman when I met her had spent fourteen years in a county asylum. Had the "treatment" she received, but had no power to alter, been but curative, one year would have sufficed to effect a cure; for hers was but a mild form of insanity, caused by overstrain. Think of the agony of those fourteen years!

"What I suffered," she said, "I cannot describe. I think no one could imagine it, and I am convinced that neither the doctors nor attendants had the least idea of the depths of my suffering."

She was a well-educated Frenchwoman, who came to England as a teacher of her own language; but the exacting nature of her studies for her certificates had told heavily on her nervous system. She gave up the appointment her diploma gained for her, and came to England hoping that the less arduous duties in a school here, and the change of scene, would restore her shattered health. Unfortunately the wounds were too deep, and instead of deriving benefit from the change she grew worse, and her employers had no alternative but to consign her to the tender mercies of a county lunatic asylum.

She arrived in England with but a very imperfect knowledge of our language, and before she could learn it was placed in the asylum, where for eight years she never once heard the sound of her mother tongue, nor saw a French book or newspaper! Do not such—and hers is by no means a solitary example

--as she need a friend? Can a more desolate position be conceived of, even by the most imaginative brain, than this foreigner stranded in an asylum unable to speak our language or to make herself understood? The manner of her life during those terrible years had completely unfitted her for the task of again earning her daily bread, of taking up the responsibilities of life and of taking her place again in the world from which she shrank timorously, whilst at the same time she eagerly longed to regain her long-lost liberty, and to return to her native country.

Would it not have cost the taxpayers less to have given that woman one year's curative treatment, which would have restored her at the end of that time to her family and friends, and to her place in the world as a worker, than to have maintained her for fourteen years—possibly for life?

But to continue. From the night I wrote my confession I remember nothing that happened for longer than five or ten minutes at a time, except when I was cruelly ill-used by that fiend—as I always think of her—or her satellites. Dreams and visions intensely realistic and vivid passed before me, but always and ever the burden of something I could not do, rested upon me. Now I thought that the Pope was dead, and that the choice of his successor rested with me entirely. I could see carriages containing the whole College of Cardinals waiting outside the house

where I lay, waiting for the decision which weighed so heavily on my mind, but which, try as I would, I could not give. Requests, entreaties, demands availed nothing. The burden of the momentous decision caused me as much suffering as my inability to make a choice, and it seemed to me that days passed during which I endeavoured to the best of my ability, but always in vain, to appoint a Pope.

Then this passed, and I found myself many miles above the earth, vainly endeavouring to reach the sun, which shone with a light far exceeding anything I had ever imagined possible. It seemed to me that I passed through at least six different atmospheres, each more rarified than the other; that awful thunderstorms burst below me; that I saw the heavy masses of dark cloud around me, saw the lightning strike the earth in fiery balls and zig-zag flashes. But I was too high up to be hurt, and ever I strained every nerve to reach that dazzling light, that seemed to fill the universe with glory, but all my efforts were in vain. With no apparent effort I accomplished immense distances, in pursuit of that glorious orb, whose effulgence no mortal eye could have looked upon, and retained its mortal sight, but the region of golden light, so dazzling that ever and anon I hid my eyes, lest I should be blinded, receded as I pursued, and all my strenuous efforts were fruitless.

Then I saw my doctor dying because I could not utter the words that alone would have saved him.

Friends urged me to speak, but I could not make the effort; I was too weak, but my inability to save a life, which I knew to be precious to his family and friends, caused me bitter remorse and an agony of suffering.

Then a little boy, the son of a friend of mine, could be saved from a horrible death only by my interposition; but again, although I longed to help, I was powerless to speak or move. The mother's frantic appeals rang in my ears, but I could only stand passively by, longing to save the boy, yet unable to move, to speak, or to act.

Again a friend urged me to give her the key of an escritoire; the fate of an empire, of millions of precious souls, hung on my delivering up that key, but I could not do it. My friend expostulated, entreated, urged me by the love I had borne her mother, to comply with her request, which became an agonizing appeal; yet, much as I longed to do so, I could not give up that key. It faced me in the escritoire, but an impassable gulf yawned between me and it, and I could not reach it, nor make any effort to do so. At last the heavens opened, and I saw the dead mother in the regions of that wonderful light I had so vainly tried to reach, and heard her say, "I will come again to earth and compel you to restore that key, although it will cost me my place in Heaven to do so." Still I was impotent, some power withheld me, and finally, when I had suffered tortures, my

friend entered the room and grasped the key, to my intense relief, and that dream vanished only to be followed by another equally tormenting.

The mantelpiece of the room in which I was had a velvet-covered board, with a piece of painted velvet hanging about twelve inches below it. The design was conventional daisies, and years before I had myself painted it on a groundwork of exactly the same colour. Every time my eyes rested on it, some dim memories were stirred, and I tried in vain to clearly recall if this were my own painting or not, and how it came to be in my room. Always it puzzled and troubled me sorely, but towards the end of my occupation of the room I was able to remember all about it, and it ceased to cause me further worry.

Sometimes it seemed to me that my room was a lift, and that I ascended and descended in it, and the motion was as real to me as it had ever been in a real lift. And now a chance word in ordinary conversation, or an incident recalls these vivid and torturing dreams to mind. They were caused by the starvation and excessive drugging to which I was subjected. If I objected, and tried as far as my excessive weakness would permit to resist, the woman poured them literally down my throat, causing me intense pain, and then described me as violent. I remember awaking from a drugged sleep, and finding the doctor and my sister standing at my bedside. My arm pained me, as though it had been pricked.

I looked at it, and noticed a small puncture. Feeling rather than knowing that morphia was being injected, and having a horror of drugs, I sucked the puncture, hoping thus to draw out the poison. But this had been inserted into my legs also, and soon I was again unconscious of all around me.

Of this I am convinced, had I not been so unmercifully drugged, I should soon have recovered my health, because when the effect of the drugs wore off my mind was perfectly clear. I remember, too, on another occasion seeing the doctor at my bedside holding a glass of some rose-coloured liquid in his hand. I was as fully conscious of my identity, my position, and illness at that moment as of any previous event of my life.

“Oh! Don’t give me that medicine!” I implored. “It will make me worse; I have never taken such medicines in my life, and they are killing me.”

“If you do not take it I shall force it down you,” said the doctor.

As the woman and her assistants had hurt my throat—always very sensitive and small—by cruelly working it with their thumbs, and by forcing the drugs down it, rather than suffer further pain I reluctantly took the medicine, and knew nothing more for hours, unless recalled to consciousness by the cruel treatment of the woman. As my throat caused me great pain, not only then but for some time after I arrived at the asylum, I frequently put my hands

to it, and this the women round me asserted was a sign that I wished to commit suicide by cutting my throat; and justified my sister in describing me as suicidal "occasionally" on the reception order; but she afterwards, when I procured a copy of this order, absolutely refused to give any other reasons for describing me thus, nor would she or the woman give me any particulars of any attempt I made on my life, for the very good reason that they could not, because I made no such attempt.

I was three days alone in my house, and could then, had I had any tendency towards suicide, have taken my life in twenty different ways; but I can truthfully say, that no such thought ever came into my head, either then or later, nor did the idea ever mingle in the many dreams and visions I had when under the influence of drugs, or when delirious. When I wrote to the woman who had nursed me, desiring particulars of my attempted suicide "occasionally," she did not reply herself, but instructed a lawyer to write complaining that I had written his client threatening letters—which I had certainly not done—and informing me that if I wrote again proceedings would be taken against me. So my sister could make an absolutely false statement on the reception order, and I, having been represented as insane, had no redress, nor could I compel her or the woman to give me an explanation. As my sister truly said, "We have a dozen witnesses to disprove

any statements you may make, but *you* have not *one* on your side." No; my sister took every precaution. Not one of my friends was permitted to see me, yet when I was under the influence of drugs I was exhibited to the woman's friends, who, I am told, are ready at any moment to give evidence in her favour. The word of a patient suffering mentally, if ever so slightly, is discredited, no one believes any statement, although it be strictly true—and that gives an ill-disposed person the opportunity to carry out any dishonest purpose.

And if such things could happen in my case, are they not daily happening in that of others? And they will continue to happen until helpless sufferers, such as I, are protected from enemies and harpies; and the care of the insane—more especially in the initial stages—is assigned to specialists, and duly trained and qualified nurses only, in mental hospitals, not asylums.

The woman who nursed me could with impunity torture me hourly, drug me, starve me, and cut off my hair, yet I am powerless to punish her. I was mentally ill—I have no redress.

CHAPTER V

HOW I WAS MADE A LUNATIC (CONTINUED)

Those who have read Charlotte Brontë's "Villette" will remember Lucy Snowe's illness during the holidays she spent alone, save for the presence of the idiot girl, in la rue Fossette. That illness reminds me forcibly of my own, more especially Lucy's return to consciousness. Unlike me, when unconscious, she had neither dreams nor visions, for, more fortunate than I, she had not been drugged, and she received in her hour of need skilful medical treatment, kindness, good food, every comfort, and attention. I do not know if a doctor would suggest that Lucy was insane; if she were not, then neither was I.

After I had been in the "Home" a few days the woman insisted on calling me by my Christian name, to which I strongly objected, but she persisted in the annoyance as long as I was in her house. She also spoke of my sisters by their Christian names, simply because she found I resented the liberty. I several times refused to reply to her questions for this reason; then she reported me as unwilling to speak. If I lay in bed, as I have frequently done during my

life, with my knees up, on coming into the room she, with all the strength of her strong arms and powerful frame, brought her clenched fists down upon my knees, bruising them in all directions. These bruises she showed the doctor, and assured him were self-inflicted. To my sisters also she showed her cruel handiwork, asserting that it was mine, and they were only too ready to believe her untrue statement.

Everything that the woman could devise that would irritate me she did. Straps were placed round my waist that cut into my skin and bones—I had no flesh—to this other straps were fastened, and these with the aid of cords were secured to the bottom of the bedstead. Sheets were twisted and bound round me, and then fastened to the head of the bedstead. Some kind of strait-waistcoat, I presume, that cut my shoulders and armpits cruelly, was placed on my emaciated body, and over this some kind of camisole, with very long sleeves, which fell quite a foot over my hands, thus preventing me from using them, was made by this woman, or in her house, of strong, stiff, stout bed-ticking.

My sufferings were indescribable. Too weak to stand, starving, shivering, delirious, drugged, yet with occasional returns to full consciousness and to the realization of my position. "They are going to make a lunatic of me," I said to myself, and how could I prevent them? I demanded release from the straps that held me, I demanded food—but in vain. I

suppose my sister must have noticed how I shook with cold on one of her visits, for a fire was put in my room. When my sister had left, the woman angrily threw coals on the fire. "Heap on the coals, keep her warm," she shouted angrily. "Who is going to pay, I wonder, and coals the price they are?"

Every day I grew weaker, and every time I returned to consciousness I was compelled to swallow the deadly drug, or morphia, in spite of my entreaties, was injected, and I relapsed into unconsciousness, and my starved and tortured brain conjured up fresh visions and dreams.

During the third week of my stay in the "Home" the woman in charge took me out of the bed, and literally threw me across it, with my face downwards. She then called a girl about nineteen, whose name was Elise. The girl was being "trained" as a nurse; she wore the cap pertaining to the calling, but she was chiefly employed in the work of the house. When she appeared she was ordered to kneel on the bed, over my neck, thus pinning me down. Her dress and petticoats suffocated me, for my mouth was forced down on the bed, and then my head covered with Elise's clothes, whilst the woman dashed my limbs against the bedstead. The pain caused me I scarcely felt, so awful was the feeling of suffocation, and with all the strength I could summon I tried to get my head free, in order to breathe. But I was as

wax in their hands. My feeble struggles were noticed by the woman. "Keep her down firmly," she said, and the girl exerted all her strength to keep my mouth on the bed so that my faint cries should not be heard in the next room. How long my tormentors kept me in this position I cannot say, but it seemed an eternity, until panting, breathless, exhausted, and well-nigh dead, I was released, and again fell into a stupor, from which I was aroused only to be subjected to similar torture. And this was not done once but many times.

Another night, when heavily drugged, I was brought to consciousness by an oppressive weight on my chest. Opening my eyes, I saw the woman bending over me; her two hands were bearing all the weight of her body—she was tall, stout, and powerfully built—on my chest. As before, I endeavoured to free myself from the weight that was crushing the very life out of me, but in vain. With awful threats of future torments if I resisted, the woman continued to press the life out of me until I gave myself up for dead, and relapsed from sheer exhaustion and suffocation into unconsciousness once more.

One night the woman and Elise were sitting in my room. I awoke to consciousness, and could hear the woman urging the girl to do something to which she strongly objected. The girl's face turned white. "But we shall be hanged if we did that," replied the girl. "I shall guard against that," said the woman.

Then, pointing to me, "Who cares what happens to her? Nobody sees her, and nobody will know." As I did not hear what had gone before I could not tell to what they referred, but I have no doubt it was to some of the tortures inflicted on me.

On many other occasions she stood behind the bedstead, which she had drawn out from the wall into the middle of the room, and with her thumbs manipulated my throat in such a way as to cause me intense pain, and the throat to swell, so that I felt for hours after as if I were choked. I remonstrated as far as my weakness permitted, and on the doctor's next visit she represented me as "violent" and unmanageable, but I was neither the one nor the other. In vain I reproached the woman for her cruelty, in vain I begged to be left alone.

But the crowning act of this fiend's cruelty was the cutting off of my luxuriant head of hair. And this was accomplished under circumstances of wanton cruelty. As a child I had a wealth of natural curling hair, my father's pride, and which my mother had always tended with great care. I had throughout my life continued to give it the same attention, with the result that my tresses were unusually abundant for my age. As my hair was of a curly nature, it was perhaps difficult to keep in plaits, unless tied at the ends, and as I was unable to attend to it myself, it may have given some little trouble. Although she was well-paid, the woman was too lazy to give any

attention to it, and I remember opening my eyes one day and finding my sister standing near my bed. My hair was lying on the pillow, and the woman was complaining of the trouble it caused her. "I should cut it off," remarked my sister.

Some hours later I was awakened by violent tugging of my hair, which, as I have always had a very sensitive scalp, caused me cruel pain. Locking at the head of the bedstead, I saw the woman with a pair of scissors in her hand. Putting my hand instinctively to one side of my head, I encountered only the ends close to the scalp. As I lay on one side the woman had found no difficulty in clipping my hair on the other. I had got down at least two feet from the head of the bed, and the intense pain I felt was caused by the woman pulling my remaining locks through the bars of the bedstead, and dragging me bodily up to the bars by this means. When my head touched the iron, fearing, I imagine, my resistance, she cut my hair through or rather against the iron-work, in spite of my cries and entreaties, and the slight resistance I was able to make. With all her strength she pulled at my hair, dragging me, at the same time shouting and commanding me to lie still, and to give her no trouble, or I should suffer for it. I put my hands up to save my hair, in which I had taken a natural pride, and these narrowly escaped being cut, too. My very natural resistance was called "violence," and I was represented as a

dangerous maniac, because I had tried as far as excessive weakness permitted to prevent this abominable outrage.

I have since been told that when the doctor next visited me he expressed his indignation that such an extreme measure had been adopted without his authorization or knowledge; but my sister, whose locks have always been of the scantiest, had accomplished her double purpose—she had robbed me of my abundant tresses, and done all in her power to secure for me the severest treatment, when I should arrive at the asylum, to which she had from the outset of my illness determined to consign me. The woman also was freed from a daily duty she found irksome, *my feelings* were far too insignificant to be considered by either.

What the loss of my hair cost me in mental suffering I can never express. I was completely disfigured. What right had that woman to cut off my hair? Would she have dared to do so had I not been a mental patient? Why should this difference be made in the sane and insane? The latter does not cease to feel, simply because the mind is deranged. It may seem an exaggeration to say that I felt the loss of my hair almost as much as that of my home; I dreaded to go again into the world, fearing ridicule; besides, my shorn head completely altered my appearance. As an instance of the daily annoyance to which I was subjected, the night before I left the "Home"

the woman showed me the hair she had so ruthlessly cut from my head. The tresses were laid on an open newspaper. "Give them to me!" I cried. "They are mine! You have no right to keep my hair!"

"I have a perfect right," she replied. "You will never have your hair, for I shall keep it. It belongs to me."

I tried to take it, but I was too weak to rise from my bed, and the woman triumphantly bore off my locks, and placed them in her own room. Months after, a few wisps, about a quarter of the amount cut off, were sent me. What was done with the remainder I do not know.

As soon as I was allowed to write a letter, which was about a week after I entered the asylum—I could not have written three connected words in the "Home," so dazed was I with drugs, yet a week after I left I was able to write as well as ever in my life—I indignantly expressed my resentment of the woman's cruel act, and demanded of my sister the reason for her unwarrantable action. Her reply was, "We feared you *might* tear it out by the roots, and then it would never grow again." I replied that she might have delayed the clipping until I had actually pulled some out, and that the woman in pulling me up from the middle of the bed had done the roots very considerable injury, besides causing me great pain. But my sister knew quite well that I should never have touched my hair, because of the tenderness of

my scalp; she knew, too, my constitutional shrinking from physical pain, and that I cared too much for my hair to injure it in any way.

When I got to the asylum and saw that the patients' hair had not in one instance been removed, I felt a quite natural indignation against my sister and the woman, and much I desired to punish both as they deserved. However, for this ample funds are necessary, and when did a mental patient ever receive redress from a court of law for injury inflicted on him or her by nurses or attendants? The lunatic is outside the pale of the law; he is legally dead.

I was informed in the asylum that a mental patient's hair is never cut. It is tightly plaited, and if necessary sewn, and this is done in county as well as in private asylums. My sister's excuse, therefore, that had I been placed in a county asylum my hair would have been cut off as a matter of course I found to be in common with nearly all her statements to me—absolutely untrue.

When tightly plaited it would be impossible for a patient to tear her hair out by the roots; but when only an inch long, as mine was after the woman's cruel operation, nothing could have been easier than for me to have pulled it all out, had I been so minded, but I was not.

When I deplored the loss of my hair to the asylum doctor, at the time he told me I could have my discharge, he remarked, "You probably tried to strangle

yourself with it." But such an idea had never for a moment entered my head, nor did I until then know that it was possible to make a halter of one's hair. Cutting my hair was an act of deliberate cruelty, its motive simply as I have stated, to represent me as dangerous, and to cause me the greatest possible amount of mental pain, and so to increase my malady. Yet this I owed to my sister, who now charges me with ingratitude for all her *kindness* to me!

For the starvation, the blows, the drugging, the bruises, the barbarous ill-treatment to which I was subjected in that fatal "Home," I have, as I have said, no redress. No one believes *my* side of the story. I was mentally afflicted, therefore no dependence may be placed on my word. But three facts cannot be controverted, my loss of weight in five weeks, my gain in three after my removal, my asking at the asylum for food when I was represented as refusing it on the order, and the cutting off of my hair, which latter was done by the woman without the doctor's authority and knowledge. Reasoning from analogy, if these are undisputed facts, my other statements ought to be accepted as true; for true they are. I have exaggerated nothing; if error has crept into my narrative, then I have erred in but faintly describing what I had to bear, and the personal violence to which I was most unnecessarily subjected by the woman and those she hired to help her, for whom, of course, I paid dearly.

To sleep at night was utterly impossible; in fact, so drugged was I that I could scarcely distinguish night from day, and lost all count of time. During the last ten days two, sometimes three, women were with me, and the room was a blaze of light, which circumstance alone, when quite well, would have effectually banished sleep. One of the women was a hunchbacked dwarf, with hands like steel, and with them she twisted and tortured mine for hours together of the long weary nights until they were swollen, and so sore I could scarcely bear the touch of the bed-clothes. In vain I exerted my little remaining strength to free my hands from that vice-like grip; in vain I pleaded to be left alone, the dwarf kept my hands in hers, and the other woman sat on my wasted body or limbs, causing me intense suffering.

I can imagine that the woman became frightened towards the end of the fourth week; she feared that I should die in her house; so by all means in her power she expedited my removal from it. The effects of the excessive drugging began to manifest themselves in convulsive twitchings of every part of my body; my arms shook as with a palsy. My swollen hands trembled, and I seemed to have lost all power over them. My sister was only too pleased to second the woman's desire to get me out of her house before I died, and when next the doctor came I was represented as having torn all my clothing, of screaming, and of all the mad things

a lunatic is supposed to do or say. That my clothing was torn, or rather cut, in every direction was true enough. Two of my nightdresses were without collars, they had been cut off, and they—with every other article of clothing I had worn in the "Home" were torn and cut in every direction. Now I was physically incapable of holding a pair of scissors in my trembling and shaking hands, therefore I could not have cut off the collars, nor could I have made rents in seams, even had I desired to do so. The garments cut by the woman were quite new, and when I awoke from a period of unconsciousness I expressed my indignation that my recent purchases should have been so wastefully spoiled—for I have all my life taken the greatest care of my clothes, never having had too much money, and that dearly-earned, to spend on toilettes, etc. When told that I had torn the garments I was naturally most indignant, but the woman knew her power, and merely laughed at what she called my new delusion. It is so easy for the sane attendant to shelter her own misdeeds under the cloak of the patient's "delusions." Attendants know that no one will credit any statement made by a person suffering from delusional insanity, so to represent me as destructive, when I had not torn one thread of my possessions, was easy enough.

In order to certify me as a lunatic, it was necessary that I should be seen by a magistrate. Some months after I had left the asylum I wrote asking the

Commissioners for a copy of my reception order, and I then saw the magistrate's name. It was strange to me. I had no recollection of seeing this, or any other person, in my room during the last week of my stay in the "Home," when, as the effects of the drugs were wearing off, or rather I was getting accustomed to them, I became every day clearer in my mind, and remember nearly everything that happened. I found, however, that his visit had been dispensed with, for he says, "I have had no opportunity of seeing the patient before signing this order, the case being put before me as urgent."

Surely here is a palpable injustice. Ought a magistrate to be allowed to sign so serious, so important a document as a reception order without seeing the person he helps to consign to a living grave? I feel convinced that had he seen me, *when I was not under the influence of drugs*, I should never have been sent to an asylum. Then had I not a right to have been examined as to my mental condition by this independent witness? If I possessed that right I was deliberately, and of malice aforethought, deprived of it by the persons who then surrounded me. Surely as a criminal is allowed to prove his innocence—oftentimes a most difficult thing to do—the mentally afflicted should be given every chance to prove their sanity; and that I could have proved mine later events conclusively show, had I only been given a fair chance. But throughout my illness everything

was done to increase my malady, and that I was deprived of a visit from the magistrate is only in keeping with the other circumstances attending my committal. But this omission only proves how easy it is to defeat the purpose of the law, which states that three persons must see the patient and sign the order. Here is certainly urgent need for reform. My memory, however, served me well; I could not remember seeing a magistrate, and I did not see one. The woman feared I should die, my sister that she would lose her revenge, and to obviate my being seen by the magistrate my case was represented as urgent! Had the drugging only been stopped, and I had obtained the food I needed, I could not have been committed, for I was as sane when taken out of the "Home" as ever in my life. All the delusion as to my having rendered myself liable to arrest had passed away; my mind was clear, except so far as it was affected by drugs; I was, of course, as weak physically as I could be, and sinking from starvation, but I was in full possession of all my senses.

The testimony of another doctor was necessary, and here again I laboured under a disadvantage. There was in the town in which I lived a medical man—a retired army surgeon. He was not considered particularly clever; I knew him slightly, my sister knew him very well, and as she had frequently discussed with him my sins of omission and commission—I had never mentioned our differences to him

—I had been represented in the worst possible light, and he had not heard the other side. He was chosen by my sister to give his testimony as to my state of mind. I paid his fee, of course, but I had no choice in his selection; had the opportunity been given me to decide, he was certainly the last man I should have desired to see, for I always felt that he was prejudiced against me.

Seeing that I was awake and conscious, the woman told me that this doctor was coming to see me, and I at once guessed that his coming was connected with my removal. I also instinctively felt that his verdict would be against me, knowing that he was my sister's friend. In a few moments he entered the room. Now I can well understand that a man who had seen me only when well, should doubt my identity even when everything had been done to make me look as demented as possible. With my cropped head, my bones starting from my temples, my cheeks fallen in, my eyes starting from my head, my face a ghastly white, in a cut and torn garment—which was not my handiwork—fully conscious of my grotesque appearance, and the caricature of my former self I presented, and bitterly resenting my plight, I replied quietly to the one or two questions he put to me.

His examination lasted scarcely three minutes, and as he turned to leave the room, feeling that his verdict was unfavourable to me, I raised myself feebly in the bed with the idea of following him, and praying him

to save me from an asylum. In order to emphasize my request, I laid my trembling, swollen hand on his arm to detain him. Roughly shaking it off, he exclaimed to the woman standing near, "She will be tearing me to pieces next!" How helpless are the insane! How their most innocent actions can be and are misrepresented to suit the humour of the person or doctor attending them! Far from me was the thought of violently assaulting or of touching the doctor with that idea. Besides, I was far too weak to have crushed a fly, and certainly should not have attempted a passage at arms with a strong man in the prime of his manhood. Yet my sister has since informed me that this doctor had experienced great difficulty in repelling the attack I made on him! This doctor affirmed on the reception order, "She is violent in her manner, incoherent in her remarks (which I am convinced he would have been, had he gone through my experiences), and will not answer questions put to her, but tries to catch hold of my clothes. She also informed me that she was in a well."

I can assert, and truthfully so, that the one or two questions he put to me on that occasion I answered coherently and correctly. That I attempted to touch his clothes is absolutely untrue; I did lay my hand on his arm—quite a different matter—and for the reason I have stated. When he saw me on a previous occasion I remember having had one of the realistic and vivid dreams—the result of the unmerciful

drugging—of going into a well, and of my sister being at the bottom, and enticing me down, and that I had a great horror of being put by my sister in this well. But I had no dream of any kind or sort on the last occasion on which this doctor saw me, and it was to my state of mind *then* that he ought to have testified. After a night of horror and ill-treatment such as I have described, the next day—that is, the one before I was removed—about eleven o'clock the woman took me from my bed, dressed me, and in spite of my remonstrances placed on my cropped head a hat which I had worn when my abundant head of hair was dressed high, as was then the fashion. The hat had no crown to speak of, for it was intended to be worn on the hair, not on the head. But now that all my hair had gone, it rested most insecurely on the top of my head, for it could not be pinned, and the woman did not take the trouble to sew an elastic, or to put on a fastening of any kind. Tying, most untidily, an old summer veil over this hat and my face, the woman hurried me out of the room, but knowing and feeling that my appearance was most grotesque, I insisted on arranging the hat at a glass, and then I saw myself for the first time since I entered that house! I did not recognize myself, as might be imagined.

“What have you done to me?” I exclaimed, as I looked at my ghastly face, rendered still more ghastly by the deep black of the ill-fitting hat, which, as I

moved, fell from one side to the other. "I will not go out; I cannot go out looking like this. I will not wear this hat, for it slips off my head," and I proceeded as well as my shaking hands would permit to remove it. But the woman seized the hat roughly, knocked it on the top of my head, and taking me by the arm dragged me from the room.

"You will wear this hat, just as it is, and you will go out," she said, as she pushed and half carried me downstairs. I tried to walk alone, but fell in the attempt. I was too weak to stand. Calling Elise, I was placed in an invalid chair, at which stood one of the women who had tortured me at night. The woman, in her nurse's uniform, walked beside my chair, singing, as we went along, Salvation Army hymns, in order to attract the attention of the strollers on the Parade.

Perfectly conscious of my position, of what my illness meant to me, I said to the woman, "You have ruined me; I should soon have got well had you nursed me properly, but you have beaten me, and starved and drugged me, and brought me to this!" But my reproaches were unheeded, and indeed I was more than fully employed in keeping, or trying to keep, my hat on my head. There was a stiff breeze blowing, and my bruised and trembling arms, my shaking hands, had not the power to hold the hat in place. How thankful I felt that no friends or acquaintances had seen me!

But the woman was determined I should be seen.

"Now," she said, when she had taken me once or twice along the Parade, "we will go to the shops where you are well known." But I felt so ill from the exertion of holding on my hat and the effect of the strong sea-air that she was afraid to carry her threat into execution, and I insisted that if she took me to the shops I would get out and walk to my house. Why I was taken out for that one and only time during the five weeks I can only surmise. My sisters told me later that I had expressed a wish to be taken out, and that as the woman endeavoured to gratify every wish I was accordingly granted this. But that was utterly untrue. I had expressed no wish to go out on that morning. On the contrary, I had done my best to stay in the house; true, I had many times during the first fortnight of my stay begged to go out, but I was not allowed to do so, and no heed was paid to my repeated request, either by my sister or the woman. Immediately on my return to the house my teeth were removed, notwithstanding my remonstrances and entreaties, and I was forced to take a dose of medicine which rendered me unconscious of anything around me until the evening.

Some few days before, on awaking from a drugged sleep, I saw the woman standing near my bed. My mind was as clear as ever in my life. "How long have I been here?" I asked. "Five weeks, nearly," was the reply. "Then I am ruined!" I exclaimed,

for I well knew that my holidays had expired, that my pupils had not re-assembled, that my living, my home, everything for which I had worked so hard, had gone! The thought of this was agony unbearable. Bitterly I reproached the woman with her cruelty, her starvation; but a blow silenced me, and I remember nothing more for hours.

The evening before I left the "Home" I was awakened from a drugged sleep, dressed, and seated in a chair. In a few minutes my sister entered the room, and I can well believe that the sight I then presented gave her unfeigned pleasure. What a transformation five weeks of starvation, of cruel ill-usage, of drugging had effected! My sister's speech was enigmatic, and I could not understand the full meaning of what she said, for I was too dazed, but I gathered that on the morrow I was to be removed from this fatal house. This was good news, but I seemed unable to ask whither I was going. One thing struck me in the conversation. My sister replied to some remark of the woman, "And Marcia cannot bear the cold." The meaning of that remark I understood later.

How I tried to make my sister understand that I dreaded to be left alone with my tormentors during the coming night! But I could not give my thoughts clear and coherent utterance. I, however, begged my sister to stay, to remain that night, and when she rose to go I exclaimed, "Don't—don't go! I cannot stay

here alone!" But she had gone almost before my words were uttered. Little she recked or cared for my suffering. Now she could explain my refusal to hold any communication other than was absolutely necessary with her as the distortion of the mind that had lost its mental balance. She posed, too, as the injured, forgiving sister, and quite successfully, I know, from what happened later on.

Well do I remember everything that took place during that awful night. How one woman—the dwarf—held my maimed and bruised hands in her vice-like grip, how the other sat on my wasted limbs, how the woman who ought to have tended me tortured my throat, and bore all her weight on my chest until I could not even gasp for breath, and sunk into unconsciousness. How I feebly and vainly tried to resist these tortures, and to express my indignation that I should have been subjected to them. How I refused to reply when the women addressed me by my Christian name, how I longed for the morning, and for so doing and acting I was described as "violent."

During the whole of those five weeks I had been given but one bath, although I had begged again and again that I might have one. When I had been a few days at the asylum I noticed that my hands were grained and discoloured. On applying friction, I found that this was simply an accumulation of five weeks' dirt, which came away as in a Turkish bath,

one more proof of that awful woman's neglect. Accustomed as I had been all my life to my morning bath, I felt the deprivation keenly, but no entreaties prevailed on the woman to give me more than the one. Nearly every day my face was mopped with a damp sponge, and there my ablutions ended. And what a state my nails were in! Never had I seen them in that condition; indeed, my hands and nails were as unrecognizable as my face.

That woman could, because I was a mental patient, cut off my hair, which she was too lazy to dress, and even deprive me of the use of soap and water daily, and the comfort of a bath, when I was too weak, and thanks to her incessant drugging incapable of attending to myself. Yet she made a charge of four guineas per week! Surely for that I could at least have been kept in a state of cleanliness. Here, again, is the disadvantage of a mental illness.

That woman would not have dared to neglect a sane person as she neglected me. Such "Homes" as hers should be put down by the law of the land, for they are simply nurseries for lunatic asylums, and only God and their victims know the cruelties practised in them. I have heard much from patients since, who have been in "Homes" for mental treatment, and in every case the treatment was similar to my own, although in not one was it as brutal as that I received, and so it will be until mental diseases are treated as rationally as physical ailments; until the specialist

shall supersede the general practitioner; and the educated trained attendant the unskilled, ignorant, brutal man or woman who are now considered good enough to tend the mentally afflicted, but whose ministrations would not for one moment be tolerated by the sane, or permitted by a medical man, were it not that at present anything is good enough in the case of the legally dead. Were specialists to treat mental ailments from the beginning, and were these attended by skilled nurses in up-to-date hospitals, with the same kind attention given to the sane, thousands would be saved annually from asylums, and thousands of pounds saved to the taxpayer. Prevention is better than cure, and the truth of this maxim would seem to be admitted, and acted upon in the case of consumption and other scourges; perhaps its truth may some day dawn on the public mind with reference to mental diseases.

In an asylum there is no pretence to making a cure, and the only patient who ever leaves it need never to have entered it, had he or she been attended intelligently by a medical expert, and nursed properly *from the outset* of the illness. Any conscientious superintendent of an asylum will endorse this statement. Therefore, I say to those whose relatives may be stricken with any form of mental disease; "Get a specialist's advice, keep the patient at home under your own supervision, and avoid a 'Home' as you would the plague," for plague spots such "Homes" as

I entered undoubtedly are, and that my experience was possible is a proof that mine is not a singular case.

Thousands of persons could give similar testimony to mine if necessary. And the reason why this testimony is not more publicly given is that victims shrink from publicity, they shrink from confessing that they have been subjected to such indignities; others are unable to relate what they have experienced. Nor would I, for the task is far from a pleasant one, but I have an object dear to my heart, viz., to see such "Homes" as that in which I was made a lunatic swept away; to see the same care, the same attention, the same kindness bestowed on the lunatic, as on the sane man; to improve the legal position of the legally dead; to bring about a revolution, in fact, in the present treatment of the insane; and how much this is needed only those who, like myself, have experienced the inconsistencies, the anomalies, the disabilities, the deprivations, the cruelties, which are now the portion of the insane, are in a position to judge.

This revolution will never be brought about by doctors, by lawyers, or by legislation—the insane are legally dead—they are not a factor in practical politics; legislators and the law do not recognize them. But when every man and woman feels that it is his and her duty to reform existing evils, then the present state of things—which disgraces our humanity—will vanish, and a *régime* of scientific

treatment, of common-sense, and kindness take its place. Then will our asylums be brought abreast of our hospitals. Then chronic cases will be unknown, as they ought to be. Then an asylum will no longer be a living grave, a drear and dread abode, to avoid the horrors of which thousands annually take their lives. But until this revolution takes place, lives will be wrecked and sacrificed, cruelties will be practised, and ignorance reign supreme.

The long night with its tortures ended without my having had one minute's sleep. I was given, about ten in the morning, a teacupful of milk; nothing in the way of nourishment was given me during the night. My face received its daily mopping, and about eleven o'clock I was dressed, but this time I was not permitted to wear my teeth, although I asked again and again for them. Possession of these was retained by the woman, whether by my sister's orders I do not know; they were not sent with me. By what right the woman could retain them I have not been able to discover. When I wrote to her for information she vouchsafed me no reply, possibly because she could give no justifiable reason for retaining my property.

I presume that the woman found a hat too difficult to keep on my shorn head, for a motor veil was placed over it, and, a ghastly caricature of myself, I was carried to a cab, in which were one of the women who had sat up the night with me, and a friend of the

woman who kept the "Home." I wore a heavy cloak, for the weather was intensely cold, and to give the impression that I was violent the woman and the attendant sat on it, thus pinning me down. My poor wasted frame took so little space that there was ample room for the big powerful woman, myself, and the attendant—who was not by any means a small woman—on the back seat. I was most uncomfortable, of course, and begged the women to release my cloak, but in vain. My sister has since told me that she was in the house when I was taken out; if so, she doubtless had the supreme satisfaction of seeing me off to the asylum. At any rate, she made no attempt to see me or to speak to me, nor do I think that she was there.

The station was quite near, however, and arrived there four men appeared with a chair, in which I was placed. My distress at appearing in public in such a guise was overwhelming, and thankful I was when I was put into the train, where I was no longer gaped at by the curious. Of every incident of that journey, which took over three hours, I have the clearest remembrance. About mid-way we changed trains, and I was again placed on a chair, and carried to the train. After some time had elapsed we stopped at a country station, where a carriage and a pair of horses awaited us. We drove, it seemed to me, up an interminable hill. Up and up we went, and how lonely, how unfriendly, how bleak were the hills on

that grey February day! Scarcely noticing the woman, or any remark she made, I vaguely wondered whither I was being borne. I feared to inquire, dreading confirmation of my worst fears. The woman took an official-looking, large envelope from her bag.

"What is that?" I asked. "Let me see it."

"Indeed, I shall not," she replied. "You would tear it to pieces." But I had not the slightest intention of doing any such thing.

Now so much under the influence of drugs had I been kept in the "Home" that I had been quite unable to read throughout the five weeks I spent there, although up to the moment of entering I had read newspapers, books, etc., as usual, but at this moment I could have read the contents of that envelope, and have understood them perfectly; either I was getting accustomed to the drugging or I had been given less that day. I think the former was the reason, because the matron of the asylum assured me later on that each room I passed through smelled strongly for half an hour after of paraldehyde; and the doctor also told me that it took him a week to "get the drugs out of me," at the end of which time I was in every way as capable of taking my place in the world again mentally, if not physically, as the doctor himself.

About four p.m. we arrived at a house, of which the coachman rang the bell. The two women helped me out of the carriage, and carried me into the hall, where I was placed in a chair, the woman going into

an inner room, which I imagined would be the doctor's study, and carrying in her hand the envelope which contained, no doubt, the official order for my reception. After some minutes she came out accompanied by the doctor, who I at once remarked had a jerky nervous manner, with a curious movement of the head, that set in motion a lock of hair at its crown, although he was by no means well-thatched, and one eye was quite unlike the other. He asked me one or two trivial questions to which I replied. Two or three nurses entered the hall, and waited whilst the doctor spoke to me.

Then the woman appeared again.

"Kiss me, Marcia," said the woman. "I am going to leave you now."

"I kiss you!" I replied indignantly, "after all your cruelty to me! Certainly not!"

"It is her delusion," said the woman.

Then as she stooped to embrace me I summoned all my strength. "Don't touch me!" I cried, as I drew myself away from contact with the creature who had allowed me to freeze with cold, to die of hunger, whose cruel blows had left their mark on my livid bruised body, who had tortured and tormented me in every possible way, and now called upon me to kiss her! "You are a cruel woman," I cried, "and I am glad to get away from you!"

"Don't take any notice of her," said the woman to the doctor and nurses, "she always talks like that."

How easy it is to ill-treat the insane; for when they justly complain, their charges, true as mine were, can so conveniently be set down to delusions!

"I shall come to see you soon," said the woman.

"I shall refuse to see you if you do," I replied.

"I never wish to see you again; you have been so cruel."

The woman then, to my great disgust, stooped, and in spite of my protest touched my cheek. I was not physically able to push her away, for as I have said she was tall, and strong, and powerfully built, or I should have done so; besides, I was exhausted from the journey, faint for want of food. I had taken nothing but the cup of milk and a grape or two the woman gave me, which I remember I ate greedily, for it was weeks since I had seen any fruit—my favourite food—nor was any refreshment offered me in the asylum, or given me until midnight following.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE ASYLUM

The doctor's inspection—I cannot call it examination—was of the most cursory, and certainly did not last longer than two minutes. Yet he told me many times after that I was brought to him in a dying condition! Signing to the nurses, they lifted the chair and carried me up and down stairs, through a glass-house, up more stairs, through a passage used as a bedroom, and finally deposited me in a room leading out of the passage, and I saw no more of the doctor until half-past ten the next morning, yet I was in a dying condition! I was undressed, my clothes placed in cupboards in the room, in which were two beds, and I was thankful to see that they were not removed, as when I entered the “Home.”

Silently I wondered where I could possibly be. Was I in an asylum? The thought made me shiver; I felt drowsy, and turned over in my bed with the idea of sleeping, when my fingers caught in a hole in the sheet. It was a three-cornered rent, about an inch and a half in length, and I very naturally called the attention of the woman standing near my bed to

it. Now it would have been impossible for me to have torn that sheet, which was strong and new. I had not the strength in my fingers to make a three-cornered rent, nor had I had the time. I am an experienced housekeeper, and have mended too many sheets not to see, even dazed as I then was, that this sheet had been washed since the rent was made. Yet the doctor told me later on that the first night I was in his establishment I tore his sheets and blankets.

This was nothing more nor less than a deliberate lie, for in half an hour from the time I entered the asylum I was in what was called "the pads," where there were neither the one nor the other. I could have been but ten minutes in this bed, and I had neither sheets nor blankets in the cell. When the doctor made this utterly untrue statement I indignantly denied it. "Show the torn sheets and blankets to me," I demanded. "Oh, they have been mended long since," he replied in his jerky way, as he passed on through the ward. But I followed him. "Show me the mended sheets," I urged. But he had gone, and refused to take any further notice of my request. Nor could I get any satisfaction from the matron or attendants. "If I have torn these things, and I am ready to take an oath I have not, they can be produced," I insisted, but no notice was taken; my request was simply ignored, and the only answer I got was, "You did tear them; half a dozen of us can swear we saw you. Who will believe you?"

Nobody. You had better be quiet, and not worry us any further. If you keep on like this you'll find yourself pretty soon in No. 2"—of which I had a horror—so I said nothing more. But I found when the doctor sent in my bill that I was charged five shillings for repairs! Now I mention this because it is only one instance out of thousands in which the sane impose on the insane.

The attendants I at once saw were ignorant, vulgar women, who regarded me as a good joke, and treated me as a curiosity. On my showing the rent in the sheet, without even one word of warning, I was hustled from the bed, thrown into a blanket, and rushed—whilst the women joked, laughed, and made merry at my expense, my terror and alarm providing them with the keenest enjoyment—down one flight of steep stairs and up several others, along passages and corridors turned into bedrooms, until I had no breath left.

Now I had in the "Home" been subjected to every kind of ill-usage, and I was now in a strange house, among strangers. My head was still far from clear, my brain dazed from excessive drugging, and I was terrified beyond expression at the behaviour of these unknown, coarse women. The conviction came upon me that I must be in an asylum, and all the horrors I had heard of these places rushed over my tired brain like a flood. I had heard dimly of icy cold baths, of padded cells, when I little thought I should ever run the risk of being placed in either the one or

the other. But here, I thought, there is a doctor ; he surely will protect me from outrage, from a repetition of the ill-treatment I had borne in the "Home." So I gathered all my strength and called as loudly as I could for the doctor, and demanded to see him before being subjected to any further torture. Was it strange that I screamed as loudly as my failing and feeble strength permitted? I argue that any sane person in my circumstances would have done as I did, for I knew that the doctor could save me from these dreadful women, and from whatever fresh tortures awaited me.

One of the women wore paper cuffs, and in my fright I tore out a piece the size of sixpence, and this hung for days to the cuff, and was exhibited to every one, before me, as evidence of my violence. Another of the women said I tore the bodice of her apron, but that I never saw. I may have torn both in my terror, and I think a sane person would have done more.

I consider that the doctor ought to have come to me, and had he done so I should have been spared a night of agony and the incurable internal disease, the result of the chill I contracted from exposure in the cell to the intense cold of a freezing February night.

But a doctor in a private asylum is an important person, whilst a patient is of no importance, except from a financial point of view. So the attendants only jeered and laughed, and hugely enjoyed my fright.

"You may call for the doctor, my lady (a favourite form of address to new-comers, I found), he won't come to the likes o' you. Scream away," they said.

Then as we reached an underground passage a heavy door was opened, and using language such as never before had been addressed to me, the attendants literally tossed me from the blanket on to the floor of a dark cell, where I lay for some time unable to move and in a state of semi-consciousness from fright and exhaustion. I think the extreme cold of that hideous cell awoke me to a sense of my terrible position. It was a bitter February night, although when I awoke it could not have been more than half-past five or six p.m. An icy wind from a long, narrow grating, high up near the ceiling, smote my shorn head, and pierced my unclothed and, save for a nightdress, uncovered body.

Now I have all my life suffered intensely from cold, and in my own house had been surrounded by every comfort in winter. A warm room and a warm bed I had always enjoyed, as a matter of course, and indeed both were essential to my health, if not to my life. Yet here was I, a woman of fifty-nine years, when practically dying, thrown—with or without the doctor's knowledge—into an icy cell, with no bed, and no means of procuring warmth, yet I knew that if I was in a private asylum I should have to pay dearly for this abominable treatment.

Indignation gave me the strength to look around me, and I found that I was lying on the floor, on which were two mattresses, one covered with American cloth, the other with a linen ticking. Neither was in a sanitary condition, and a feeling of sickness came over me as I bent down to them. In one corner—the cell was octagon shaped—was a heap of something, which on examination proved to be two old-fashioned quilted bed-covers, or counterpanes, and in the opposite corner was a pillow stuffed with chaff and uncovered.

I drew the unsavoury quilts over me in a vain attempt to obtain some warmth, and rested my head on the uncovered dirty pillow, but no warmth resulted. Rigours of cold shook my emaciated body, and hearing sounds in the corridor I called as loudly as I could for help. A light suddenly illumined the cell, and on turning in the direction whence it came I saw a square of glass in the wall. Dragging myself into an upright position, I managed to reach the window, and found that a bath-room adjoined my cell. An attendant was laughing at me, and hugely enjoying my distress. A patient was in the bath, and the room was lighted by a jet of gas that dazzled me after the darkness.

“Take me out of this horrid place, and give me a bed. I am dying of cold!” I exclaimed, as well as I could for cold and terror.

“A nice room, isn’t it?” said the nurse. “I hope

you like it." With that she closed the shutter, and darkness again surrounded me. An outside clock struck, and how thankful I was to know the time! The sole furniture of the cell consisted of the articles I have named, and I satisfied myself that this was so by groping round the walls, and these I found were covered with American leather, and painted cream. On them former occupants had drawn, with what materials I do not know, but the drawings were all brown in colour, grotesque heads of men, women, and animals. These brought to my mind the Bastille and other prisons of which I had heard and read, and added to my terrors. The door only was padded, and that but slightly so; as far as protection from injury was concerned, the cell was a farce. I have since found that it was of the most antiquated type, and would not have been tolerated in a county asylum. It sufficed, I suppose, for private patients.

At intervals the piece of wood in the bath-room that covered the glass in the wall of the cell was opened, and a mocking face would appear, and I would again beseech to be removed, or to be given a blanket.

"What you've got is good enough for the likes o' you, and if you don't be quiet and hold your row I'll come in and make you," or something to that effect, was all the answer I got. At last the door opened, and a "nurse" stood in the doorway. Again I begged to be removed, or to be given some bed-clothes. The

woman shut and locked the door, and in a short time returned with a piece of a blanket torn and dirty. "Take that," she said angrily, "and if you bother for anything more I'll come and give you a sound thrashing. That'll quiet you for an hour or two."

Fearing she would fulfil her threat, and knowing what I had borne at the "Home," I took the blanket and wrapped it round me in a state of mind impossible to describe. Fear, terror, and dread of what might await me in this strange place, and of the awful horrors I had dimly heard about asylums filled my mind. And I was so weak, so exhausted, how should I be able to resist, as I felt I wanted to do, how fight for my life and reason with these cruel women? If this were an asylum, then the tortures to which I had been subjected in the "Home" were nothing to what I should now have to bear. I might be killed, and who would know? My sisters, I knew, would never trouble were I killed a hundred times, and here in this asylum I was as far from help or succour as though I were living in the Middle Ages, and securely locked in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

Then came upon me the remembrance that when once a man or woman got into an asylum they rarely came out again. I had never heard of any one who had come out. Had my sisters got me here to keep me for the rest of my life? And they were sleeping in warm comfortable beds, whilst I, their victim, froze in this hideous cell. Oh, the overwhelming agony of

it all! But I told myself *I* would not stay in an asylum, *I would* get out. All my life I had conquered circumstances. I had often done what my friends had assured me was impossible. I would not be beaten now. I could not think of hourly, daily association with those swearing, tyrannizing women who had treated *me* as their inferior, without an agony indescribable. What a life for a woman whose tastes and surroundings had from childhood been intellectual and cultured! No wonder that in one night my shorn locks took on the tint of age, and whitened like snow. I often wonder now that I preserved my reason so great was my mental suffering; certainly the terror alone that I experienced was enough to turn the brain of any strong man, and I was weakened by starvation, dazed with drugs, frozen with cold, sinking for want of food, and shaking from fear. Save for the teacup of milk given me at ten that morning, I had tasted nothing that day. No food had been offered me, or I should gladly have taken it, but my report said I refused food, and the accuracy of the statement needed no test in the case of a lunatic. There is no need to waste time—a valuable commodity of the attendants—in an asylum over so small a matter as whether a patient's symptoms have or have not been accurately described.

I in my ignorance imagined that a patient could see a doctor at any time. Consequently every time the nurses appeared I demanded an interview with the

superintendent. This provoked great merriment, and indeed the doctor was fast asleep in his comfortable bed, and no thought of my sufferings or that my very existence was imperilled by the unnecessary and cruel exposure to cold disturbed *his* repose. Indeed, what would one lunatic more or less in the world matter to that world? Why should the doctor disturb himself for the sake of a patient, who was of less account than the lowest of the brute creation in his and the world's estimation? Therefore the attendants could make merry at my request, and so ignorant were they of the duties of sick nurses or of nursing that had I died they would not have noticed or understood the signs of approaching dissolution.

About midnight I heard voices and steps near my cell. I presume that some one had remembered that I had, so far, had nothing to eat, for two attendants appeared, one bearing a tumbler of some liquid, the other a lantern. Before I could speak, one, a tall, very strong, coarse, swearing woman, whose name I discovered afterwards was Stiles, had seized me roughly, and in a moment I was lying flat on the unsavoury mattress (I had for an hour or two sat up, with a blanket—or piece of blanket—round me, vainly trying to get some warmth into my frozen feet by weakly rubbing them). The other attendant sat upon my trembling legs, whilst she pinioned my shaking arms. Then Stiles roughly opened my mouth and thrust a tube down my throat, causing me intense

pain. The choking sensation was indescribably horrible. To swallow was impossible, and a sickening sensation of suffocation almost robbed me of consciousness. How long the pipe was in my mouth I cannot say; it seemed, from the agony it caused me, quite half an hour. When the pipe was withdrawn the woman turned—or so it seemed to me—my mouth inside out. As I have before stated, I have no natural teeth, and all my life my gums have been very sensitive. What she really did, was to deliberately thrust her big, coarse fingers round my gums. She may have considered my mouth a curiosity, and so a desire to examine it led her to cause me the pain she did. As her rough fingers went round and round my mouth they lacerated the gums in every direction, and a stream of blood followed them as she removed them. Before I could protest she struck me a heavy blow on my left cheek-bone, which protruded from the skin alone that covered it. This was followed by some half dozen blows on my head—a twentieth century method of “settling the brains.” Then, getting up from the floor, she gave me a parting kick, and with a vile word never before addressed to me, she left me more dead than alive.

The intense pain in my throat, the smarting of my mouth and face, the pain in my head from the blows alone prevented me from relapsing into unconsciousness.

When, later on, I was able to get up I recounted to

the matron what happened on that first night, exactly as I have given it here, but she made no remark whatever, nor was any report made to the doctor. Such brutal attacks were too common to be noticed.

Some hours later I was taken by a woman into the bath-room. She threw a towel at me with which to wipe my bleeding mouth.

Looking at her, I said, as I showed her the large discoloured patch, "You will hear of this again. You have no right to treat me like this."

Knowing her power, the woman only laughed and mocked. I was too impotent, she well knew, to bring a rebuke on her head.

This attendant was the most callous, hard-hearted, cruel, and brutal of all, yet she was given, I noticed, the care of all the new-comers; to break them in properly, I imagine. She also had the entire control and charge of all the worst and chronic cases. Was it surprising that they remained chronics? How my heart bled for those (many of them) gentle-voiced cultured women, left day after day, year in year out, to the tender mercies of such a brute! Ought such things to be possible in this twentieth century? A full inquiry, if such could be made, would disclose a state of things in private asylums that would sweep them off the face of the earth; that is, if the sane are as anxious to protect their suffering and weak fellow-creatures from the naturally brutal

instincts of the strong and powerful, as they are in the case of the dumb creation.

I have, since I returned to the world, endeavoured to arouse interest in and for these martyrs by relating incidents which came under my personal observation or my own experiences. But in not one instance have I been credited with speaking the truth. My hearers received with incredulity my statements, assuring me that such things are impossible in England to-day.

But they are hourly possible, to the shame of a great nation. And I think that this incredulity arises in great measure from the instinctive conservatism of the British nation. Lunatics have from time immemorial been placed on a level with the brutes, or I should rather say below the brute creation; that, in most folks' opinion, is their proper place as established by custom, law, and usage; then why remove them from their appointed place? Humanity did not count for centuries as a factor in the treatment of the insane, why bother about it now? What was good enough for lunatics hundreds of years ago ought to be good enough now; the sane are far too fully occupied in looking after their own interests to waste valuable time on thousands hidden away in lunatic asylums, who are of no earthly use to them. And so, when a case of barbarity does get heard of outside the asylum walls no one takes it seriously, or troubles to inquire into it; why should they? It does not affect any one personally but the lunatic, and of what account is he?

Let a sane person enter one of these places as a patient, and his conservatism will fall from him as scales from the eyes of the blind. He will not only see them, but *feel*. How different is the position of the sufferer and the indifferent onlooker! Yet it is in the hands of this same indifferent spectator that the necessary drastic reforms in the treatment of the insane lie. May he soon awake to a sense of his great charge is the prayer of every person who has ever entered those prison walls as a patient.

The sight of the woman Stiles for at least three weeks caused me fright and terror. Yet I am not a timid woman naturally, but I was physically exhausted, weak, dying, and dazed. What I endured from fear of a repetition of such or worse assaults completely banished sleep for the first nine nights, although I was so overpoweringly sleepy that only with the utmost exertion of all the will-power I possessed could I keep myself awake. Fear overcame the desire and the power to sleep, but towards the end of the first week, when one attendant, who had by her gentler and kinder manner inspired some degree of confidence, was with me during the day, I sometimes gave way to the craving for the solace of sleep, and so I may during that awful week have had two hours' forgetfulness. But my senses were in sleep ever on the alert, and the slightest rustle awoke me with a start, my hands held up to ward off some expected attack. The blessing of sleep, as I have before said,

is denied the insane, yet it is the most potent factor in their recovery. Medical science studies the needs of the body, and helps it to recover its lost health; a lost mind has to recover itself, unaided by science, and under every possible detrimental circumstance.

After I left the asylum I wrote, in the interests of humanity, to the Commissioners, giving in detail my experiences of the first night there, and giving the names of the attendants who had so wantonly assaulted me. I received a reply, stating that inquiry had been made at the asylum, but that my charges *had not been substantiated*, consequently they—the Commissioners—could do nothing further in the matter. Of course, both doctor and attendants contradicted and denied everything. Was it to the doctor's interest to admit the charge? The insane are not allowed proofs of assaults and ill-treatment, but their tormentors can always produce ample evidence in denial of charges, and until the treatment of the insane undergoes a drastic, urgently needed reform, this injustice will continue to be their portion.

In my reply to this communication, I stated that I had not complained with the idea of obtaining redress, since my sojourn in the asylum had taught me the futility of such a proceeding. I had stated facts in the hope that the Commissioners might be led to insist on the adoption of a rule that all patients when first committed should be kept under observation for at least twelve hours. Whether my letter

produced this desirable result I have had no means of knowing.

Later I wrote again to enquire what steps I could take to prove my sanity, since I was anxious to submit to any test imposed by the law. To my surprise I was informed that no such provision existed.

Three persons are appointed by the law to testify to the insanity of an individual, but it provides no means by which an individual, once certified a lunatic, may prove that he never was one or had recovered !

Certainly there is need for reform here.

Mr. Beers, in his autobiography, gives an instance which came under his own observation, of the line of conduct adopted by attendants towards each other when they assault their patient. A brutal attendant made an unprovoked assault upon a patient far too ill to resist him in any way. Another attendant was in the room at the time, and deliberately and purposely turned his back upon the brutal scene, in order that should enquiry be made he might be able to say that he was in the room during the time the assault was said to have been made, but that he saw nothing of it, consequently the patient had trumped up the charge. From my own experiences and from my own observations, I can quite and altogether endorse the truth of Mr. Beers' statement. But I blame the attendants less for the brutality they exercise than the doctors who condone and permit it.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE ASYLUM (CONTINUED)

About every two or three hours one or two attendants came, opened the door of my cell, laughed and mocked, or asked silly questions, and each time I requested to see the doctor, to be removed to a bed, and bitterly complained of the intense cold, which froze my almost lifeless body.

But my complaints were met each time with, "Shut up your row, you ——. I'll skin you alive if you don't. This place is good enough for you."

And judging from the brutality I had already experienced, I believed the women quite capable of carrying out their threat, so I lay down to wait with what patience I could summon to my aid for the hour of ten, before which I was told I could not see the doctor. And there in that hideous cell I counted the hours of the longest night of my life.

A thousand times I told myself that I should be kept in this dungeon for the rest of my life, that I must be in an asylum, from which I knew escape was most difficult, if not impossible. My home must have gone, also everything I prized or held dear; my life's

work was utterly thrown away. How I had toiled, how I had denied myself to make and to keep my home, that I might have a refuge in my old age, and now five short weeks had undone the labour of forty years! How unjust, how cruel was my lot, but even the shipwreck of my life was for the time of less moment than the horror and discomfort of my present surroundings. I must get out of this place, I must get a bed in which to lie down and die.

The longest lane turns, "even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to sea," the longest night, at last, gives place to dawn, and so to my infinite relief I heard—it must then have been nearly 11 a.m.—a man's voice in the corridor. But the footsteps passed and my hopes of release fell again. Then a glimmer of light fell on the darkness of the cell, and looking up I saw that the board which covered the glass of the square aperture in the wall dividing the cell from the bath-room had been removed, and, peering in at me, I recognized the face of the doctor, who had so cursorily examined me the day before. I presume that as I was represented as so violent, he feared to venture on entering the cell, but reconnoitred from the safe security of the bath-room. I could not stand, but raised myself into a sitting posture, with the dirty, ragged piece of blanket round me.

I can quite imagine that a more pitiful object of feminine humanity never presented itself to any

man's view. But the medical superintendent of an asylum is inured to that kind of thing; his susceptibilities harden, the milk of his human kindness in time dries up, and he has no sympathy to waste on so unimportant a being as an elderly, even if dying, patient; nor has he the time or the inclination to test the accuracy of the reception order. It saves time and trouble—two important considerations in an asylum—to assume it is correct, and had I died in that cell no inquiry would have been made, or considered necessary.

Fearing the doctor would content himself with just glancing at me from the square of glass, I called with all the strength I could summon—

“Doctor, are you paid for having me here?”

“Yes,” he replied.

“Then,” I commanded, with as much dignity as my lowly position admitted, “take me from this loathsome den and give me a decent bed. I am dying of cold and ill-usage.”

The doctor then asked me several questions, among others if I knew a friend of his in the town from which I came. “Yes,” I said, “but I cannot talk about Dr. B. now. I must get out of this hideous cell; take me out at once.”

Seeing, I suppose, that I was not violent, the doctor deemed it safe to enter the cell. Quitting his coign of vantage he unlocked the door, and regarded me as I sat almost at his feet. Then for the first and only

time during my sojourn in his "Temple of Health," as I later derisively named his establishment, he felt my pulse. Turning to one of the attendants, not, I was thankful to see, the brutal Stiles, he said :

"Give Miss Hamilcar a bath, then put her to bed in No. 2. But first give her a cup of tea."

"I do not take tea," I replied.

"Why not?" asked the doctor. "Tea does you no harm."

"I do not care for it, and I have not taken it for years," I replied.

"Well, what do you take?"

"I should like an egg beaten in hot milk, if it is nicely prepared," I replied.

"She must have some Virol," said the doctor to the nurse. But I protested that I did not like Virol, and I could not take it.

"That's all right," said the doctor, as he locked the door and walked away.

But a panic had seized me as I heard the word bath. Were they going to give me a cold one? I had heard dimly of patients in asylums being put and kept in icy cold baths, and frozen as was my wasted body, how could I stand the shock? I called wildly for the doctor, but he had gone, and was, I found afterwards, far too important a personage to be summoned by a mere patient.

In about a quarter of an hour the cell door was roughly opened and the attendant appeared, holding

in her hand a tumbler containing an evil-looking concoction. Without giving me a chance to take, or to drink it, she seized me roughly by the shoulders, and thrust the tumbler forcibly into my torn and still bleeding mouth, literally pouring the contents down my swollen and smarting throat, giving me no chance to swallow. The contents of the glass, very naturally came back to the corners of my mouth, for to swallow, had I been allowed to leisurely sip, would have been a painful process, and now I was choked. As the reception order stated that I refused food, the woman thought, I suppose, that I was purposely rejecting this—the vilest compound I ever tasted.

“Drink this, you ——, and quickly too, for I have no time to waste on the likes o’ you.”

This I also discovered was the usual form of address to a patient; the attendants never had “time” to devote to the comfort or well-being of their charges.

I struggled feebly to free myself from the vice-like grip of the woman, and to take the vile-tasting stuff, but uselessly, of course. What was I, in the arms of a woman like that? So she held me firmly until the glass was emptied, regardless utterly of my suffering and of my weak protests.

The doctor’s returning footsteps were heard coming down the corridor. As he passed the cell, although I could with difficulty speak, fearing not to see him again until the next day, for the women told me he visited the patients once a day only, I called him and,

as the door was open, my faint voice possibly reached him, for he stopped.

"May I take my food and medicine myself?" I asked. "My throat is very painful and sore, and so is my mouth, and this woman hurts me very much."

"Certainly," he replied, as he walked away. He had given me, a stranger and a dying woman, according to his own statement, less than five minutes of his precious time, but I was only a patient in an asylum; what did I want of medical attention?

A bath followed, and I saw for the first time, and to my horror, the countless bruises on my wasted body. I saw, too, a living skeleton for the first time in my life. My joints stood out in high relief, my arms and legs were the exact size of my bones. Never had I seen myself in such a condition.

"What has that woman done to me, to bring me to this?" I asked of the attendant.

"I expect you beat yourself about," she replied.

"Indeed I did not," I retorted. "I am the last person to hurt myself."

At this the woman laughed. "'Well, 'twasn't done 'ere," she said.

And I remarked that the attendants, as if in justification for their own brutality, always impressed upon the patients that they would be treated with far greater severity elsewhere. My bruises were pointed to as proofs that the treatment I had received in the "Home" was far more cruel than that I had experienced

in the asylum. The bruised and starved condition in which I had arrived at the asylum served as long as I was there, and possibly after I left, to furnish the attendants with a proof of their infinite tenderness, as compared with "Homes."

After the bath was finished Stiles appeared with a tumbler of milk and egg. Reluctantly she put it into my shaking hand, which scarcely had the strength to bear its weight, but by exerting all my will-power I managed, with the help of both hands, to convey the glass to my lips. To swallow it was, however, a difficult matter. My body was also racked with a cough, which the intense cold of the cell had made much worse during the night.

"Drink it down this minute, you ——," said she. "I'm not going to hinder my time with *you*"—the emphasis on the last word expressing contempt and scorn in the superlative degree.

I managed to empty the glass of its by no means appetising contents in a time which prevented the woman from carrying out the dreadful threats with which she menaced me; for in my weak and exhausted condition I was in mortal dread of this creature, of whose heavy hand I had already felt the weight.

I was then carried upstairs and placed in the most uncomfortable apology for a bed I had ever in my life seen or occupied.

How my bruised bones smarted and ached, how sore they were and how the hard lumps of the one

uneven mattress hurt! My bedstead was placed in a dark corner of the room near the fireplace, on the other side of which was another bed, and two more faced me. There were two very small windows, and a washstand and a chair or two, which completed the furniture, which was of the poorest, plainest description. The ceiling was very low, scarcely more than a foot above my head when I stood upright. On the walls were a few small pictures. I cannot describe the agony of mind I suffered as I tried in vain to find a resting place for my weary bones on this lumpy, miserable mattress.

But my sad thoughts were rudely broken in upon by an attendant, who administered a dose of medicine in the roughest, rudest possible manner. Indeed, from the moment I entered the house the greatest pains had been taken to impress upon me that I was a despicable worm, rather than a human being, and not worthy the ordinary civility accorded to the lowest criminal. And for all this a sum sufficient to have given me the comforts and refinements of a good hotel was charged me!

The matron now for the first time made her appearance, and the attendant—for a relay of nurses sat near me all day—introduced her with quite a flourish: I saw a fair, good-looking woman, of perhaps thirty years. She was evidently superior to the attendants. Surely, I thought, she will protect me from the barbarity of these women, but that, I found later, was

no part of her duty. I complained of the uncomfortable bed, and asked to get up, or at least to sit up, as the mattress hurt me everywhere, and every bone in my body smarted. I was told that my imagination led me to suppose the bed was hard and lumpy; in reality it was as soft as my own feather bed. And this, I found, was the invariable reply to any complaint; the fault lay in the patient, and was the result of a distorted fancy. So do doctors and attendants on the insane find a ready excuse for their own shortcomings; and not these only. I know that my sisters took advantage of my having suffered mentally, although so slightly, to defend their taking my furniture and other effects. The explanation was so simple. I was suffering from delusions, my charges were, therefore, utterly unfounded. Yet I was labouring under no delusions, not more than they were. But the insane, at present, have no rights; they may be robbed of their reason, their health, and their worldly goods. Those who ill-use and rob them need only say "all delusions," and everybody is perfectly satisfied, for who cares for the living dead? Not the living sane certainly. So the matron assured me that the mattress that would have disgraced a workhouse was quite soft and comfortable, and that being so, I could not have another.

My food that day consisted of milk, with some bread and butter, for as the woman at the "Home" had piratically taken possession of my teeth I could

masticate nothing else; indeed the state of my mouth and throat prevented me from eating anything but the softest food. I begged the matron to send for my teeth, which she promised to do. All that was brought me I took, yet in the "Home" I was said to refuse food. Strange, indeed, that I should ask for egg and milk, which I took very frequently in my own house, within twelve hours of leaving that "Home!" And I should have asked for food before had I not been subjected to the barbarous treatment I have described, which effectually banished appetite or any desire for food.

The room in which I was placed was the noisiest it is possible to imagine; my corner was so stuffy I could scarcely breathe; every nerve was on the alert, for a brutal attack, and quivering with terror at the terrible noises that never ceased from five a.m. until four a.m. came round again. Every moment I expected to be dragged from the bed, and to be dashed again upon that unsavoury mattress in the icy cell; I even feared I should be burnt or buried alive or carried to the bottom of a well. Yet, with my mind paralysed with all these fears, feeling more dead than alive, all my wasted body one great ache, a racking cough tearing me to pieces, and frightful noises attracting my attention every moment, I was ordered to sleep! Every five minutes attendants came in and out chattering, laughing, and talking, and there was an incessant clatter from the adjoining kitchen, where the

cooking for seventy-two persons was done. The coal cellar also adjoined my room, and day and night there appeared to be a continual heaping up and shovelling of coals in the noisiest possible way. Would a room so situated have been chosen for a sane person suffering from nerves?

Outside the door of my room was a staircase, used every moment by attendants and servants. The housemaid had the heaviest possible tread, and thumped incessantly up and down stairs. Meals were brought to the nurses who sat with me, and in all this uproar, frightened out of my drugged wits, I was expected to sleep! Could a sound, healthy man have slept under such conditions? I doubt it. Yet I was threatened, scolded, and boxed on the ears, because I disobeyed the "doctor's orders"—a term which, to be rightly understood, must be seen at work in an asylum. True, I needed, and that urgently, the oblivion, the solace of sleep, and could have enjoyed these for twenty hours at a stretch, under ordinary conditions, but everything was apparently done to prevent my procuring either.

If the day brought terror, noise, dread of evil, and fear of ill-usage, the night brought all these and many others in an intensified degree.

At six o'clock in the evening, six or seven of the worst patients were led into my room to be undressed. Three of these slept in this room, the others in the adjoining rooms. Amid an indescribable babel of

tongues, of shouting from the attendants, and of protests, more or less faint, from the patients, the undressing proceeded.

One girl of thirty perhaps, with fair hair, which she pulled every night over her face, approached my bed. She had a soft, gentle, musical voice. I learned afterwards that she had studied the violin excessively, and had then nursed a favourite brother through a dangerous illness, and just as she had the satisfaction of seeing him—through her devotion—come out of the Valley of the Shadow, where he had lingered so long, she collapsed and was brought to this asylum, where she had already spent a year.

“May I kiss you?” she asked, and on my assenting, she lightly touched my forehead with her lips. “God bless you,” she whispered, and then was called away by one of the attendants.

She never again spoke to me during the eight nights I spent in that room, which can only be described as a pandemonium. Hers was the first kind voice, the first gentle word, that had fallen on my ear since I had left my home, and the memory of its refreshing comfort will be with me until I cease to live. I owe the insane far more than the sane, and received more kindness, more sympathy, and more help from those whom doctors and nurses despised than from those latter themselves.

The other patients, some of whom were dreadfully disfigured, and most repulsive in appearance at first

sight, took not the slightest notice of me ; but I looked upon these poor creatures with eyes full of horror, and in an agony of mind no words could adequately express, I asked myself "Must I spend the evening of my life, after all my toil and striving, with these for companions?"

During the undressing the racket was indescribable. The nurses—as I soon found I was expected to call them, although they had not a shadow of right to the prefix—vociferated, shouted, shook, pushed, slapped, and even wrestled with some of their charges, all of whom would, had they been allowed, have gone quietly to bed. The poor things, however, who excited my deepest pity, appeared to take the—to me—abominable treatment quite as a matter of course. All except one little gray-haired, hump-back elderly lady, who, by some very slight misdemeanour, aroused the ire of one of the night nurses, a young, strong, ignorant, but athletic woman, who, I was told, had previously performed the duties of a housemaid in the asylum. Falling upon the poor old lady, whose gray hairs, withered arms, and pitiful hump on her shoulder, excited no compassion in this woman charged with her care, she screamed, "I've been wanting to go for you, you old sinner ; you've been rousing me up for some time. You've been asking for it, and now you shall 'ave it."

Seizing the slight and fragile-looking form in her strong arms she threw the poor old woman violently

on her back on the bed. But the lady's wrath was not unnaturally roused, and, summoning all her strength, she tried to drive off her assailant with a force that astonished me. It seemed to me for fully ten minutes the unequal contest went on, the other attendant apparently unconscious of the struggle; the patients indifferent, probably because such scenes were of such frequent occurrence that they ceased to interest or arouse them.

The old woman sometimes gained a slight advantage, but was no match for a young, strong woman. The cords of the old lady's wasted arms appeared like strong ropes, her face became a livid purple, and the veins of her temples stood out like cords, for the woman twisted the poor old thing's arms until I feared they would come out of their sockets before she gave in. Then, exhausted, faint, and, I thought, dead, she fell back upon her pillow.

"I'll give you defying me!" screamed the woman. "You make me use force"—which was utterly untrue, for the old lady had done nothing to provoke such an assault. "I'll have you in the 'pads' as soon as I've got my breath. None of your cheek and impudence to me!"

The horror with which I watched this scene may be better imagined than described. I was an utter stranger to such scenes, but, ill as I was, I could not stand, or rather lie by, and see an old woman's arms twisted out of their sockets without protest.

"How can you treat an old woman so cruelly?" I said indignantly, in the height of the combat.

The nurse paused from sheer astonishment at such a question, and eyeing me for a moment she said—

"None of *your* sarcasm, my lady, or I'll serve you the same, and that in no time too, and I'll have you in the 'pads' in another minnit if you don't stop your row."

When the old lady collapsed and the nurse had recovered her breath, she came over to my bed, and shaking me roughly, "You go to sleep," she said, "or 'twill be the worse for you." But the undressing scene, to which I have done but scant justice, and this wrestling bout were scarcely calculated to induce sleep in a new-comer, whose wildest flights of imagination could not have pictured such a scene or imagined such a pandemonium possible in any civilized country. Every moment I feared such an attack as I had witnessed would be made on me; for I had done quite as much as that poor old lady to provoke it; sleep, therefore, which would have come to me under ordinary circumstances, was impossible here. Yet how I needed it—how I craved for it!

A few minutes after the old lady's collapse she was swept out of the room, with no ceremony by the two laughing, joking attendants, who made merry at her expense, and I saw her no more that night. Truly the "treatment" of the insane is in consonance with the advance of medical science! I say, ought an

ignorant woman such as I have described to have the power to place an old, hump-backed patient, paying three to four guineas per week, in an icy cell on a freezing February night, and compel her there to spend eleven or twelve hours lying on a far from clean mattress, with no decent covering, no decent conveniences, no furniture whatever, just for a whim of that said woman? Ought such a wrestling bout as that I have described to be possible in a house controlled by a medical man in this twentieth century?

Up till half-past ten o'clock there was a constant coming and going of nurses and servants, loud, boisterous conversation and discussions, interspersed with threats, blows, and adjurations to the three patients. Huge coal-boxes filled with coals were brought in by a stalwart nurse and banged on the floor with the utmost noise, one of which she deposited close to my head. Every time she noisily approached the fire to make it up, as she stooped for the fire-irons, which she clattered furiously, I cowered down under the bed-clothes, expecting to be the next object of attack. However, with the exception of sundry rough shakings, and a resounding box on my right ear, which, in my weak state, stunned and deafened me for some ten minutes—for the woman's hand was heavy—I received no further blows. Of hard, rude, insulting words there were enough and to spare, but as we said as children, these break no bones, though they hurt my *amour-propre* sorely. But I had not the

strength to attempt resistance. I, therefore, lay with wide-open eyes throughout the long night, watching anxiously every movement of the nurses. How many times did I wish that I had died, when ten years before I had gone down into the valley during a severe attack of hæmorrhage of the stomach, and how earnestly now I prayed to die, for I knew that my life was wrecked, that irretrievable ruin stared me in the face. How my thoughts reverted to my warm soft bed in winter, my comfortable mattresses in summer, as the lumps cut into my skin. How I longed for my airy, cool room, as I suffocated in my stuffy corner! An overwhelming longing seized me for my home, and then the thought arose that if ever I regained my liberty, which was doubtful, I should be a homeless wanderer.

"Go to sleep, woman," growled the nurse, as she roughly straightened the bed-clothes, and turned me to the wall.

"I shall never sleep here," I said. "I am accustomed to a cool, well-ventilated, darkened room to myself, and to a comfortable bed. This one hurts all my bones."

"The bed's good enough for *you*," was the reply, "and if you don't go to sleep this minnit, I'll drag you up to the 'pads'."

But the air of my corner was stifling. I begged that one of the windows might be opened, for that nearest to me was filled up with the patients' clothes,

and no air could approach me from it. I had, during the undressing of the poor creatures, remarked that their clothes had been rolled up in bundles, and tossed into the window, which being old-fashioned had a wide ledge too high to serve as a seat, but large enough to take the bundles, which completely blocked up the small casement. Truly, my preconceived notions of nursing and hygiene were upset in this place, where, according to my sister, I had been sent to be cured ! I had had much experience in nursing, not professionally, of course, and my object had always been to keep a sick-room as quiet as possible, especially at night, but here, to my astonishment, the opposite was the rule, and I was soon to discover that this "opposite" prevailed in every department of the asylum. These ignorant women, who were entrusted with the lives of these poor lunatics, had received no training whatever, nor had they ever been inside a hospital, except perhaps as patients. They, however, were good enough to minister to minds diseased. They could swear at, beat, box on the ears, insult and assault their patients, and that satisfied the doctor, the commissioners, the relatives, the man in the street, or the public or private woman, who are none of them responsible for the legally dead. That the attendants were wholly unfitted to nurse the patients was nobody's business, and consequently left severely alone by everybody concerned or not.

The noise that was kept up all night was enough of

itself to keep the soundest sleeper in the world awake. Was it any wonder, then, that for nine hideous nights I did not close my eyes?

The two "nurses" came on duty at eight p.m., by which time the worst cases were in bed and supposed to be asleep. The first thing they did was to regale themselves with bread and milk; half-an-hour later tea was made with a noise indescribable. In this they were often joined by other nurses, and a babel impossible to adequately describe followed. Later on dinner was as noisily partaken of, and in an hour or two tea was made again, a pile of thick slices of bread was toasted, buttered, and partaken of in quantity that would have sufficed for the strongest navy. Throughout the night the nurses talked noisily, moved about still more noisily, opened and shut drawers, with as much noise as they could possibly make, banged fire-irons and coal-scuttles, made coarse jests, often at the expense of the patients, whom they threatened, shook, and beat, because they could not sleep in such a babel. Starting at every unexpected sound, every nerve on the rack, sleep was impossible under these conditions, yet I was threatened with all sorts of horrors if I did not sleep. Sometimes the attendants even put down their tea-cups to come to my bed, and to loudly order me to sleep. "I don't want to use force," said one, "but if you don't turn to the wall and go to sleep, I'll beat the life out of you," which would have been easily done certainly.

I was not quite sure, at that time, if I were in a gaol, a convent or an asylum, and the fear of being taken out of my bed, without warning, as had before happened, kept me wide awake. I was still under the influence of the awful drugging I had been subjected to at the "Home," and although my mind was quite sound, and I was as sane as the attendants, my head was still far from clear. How could I tell, in my state, terrified by the harsh treatment of these strange women, whose very strength was terrifying, that I should not be killed by them? The distant rushing of trains fell on my ear. O! to be free, to be in one of them away from these hideous sights, these horrid women!

I could only murmur when threatened to be beaten, "I am so weak, you are so strong, don't kill me."

"Do you think we wants to 'ang for the likes o' you?" shouted the nurse. "You idiot! I'll report you to the matron if you don't shut your heyes and go to sleep this moment, you beggar! Here you are keeping all the others awake!"

But that was utterly untrue. I had made no noise at all, being far too weak to speak above a whisper. Very thankful should I have been for some of the hot milk the nurses drank so frequently, but no nourishment was given me in the night, although I needed it, and should have had it in the natural course of events if I had not been a mental patient.

As I lay in bed on the morning of the first day, one of the nurses rudely asked :

“What’s your name?” I refused to reply. “Tell us your name,” said another, who had boxed my ears, “or you shall have a whipping as you won’t forget in a hurry.” Thinking it wiser to comply, I informed them. Whereupon they addressed me by my Christian name.

“I am not accustomed to be called by my Christian name by strangers,” I objected.

“The sooner you get used to it the better for you. You’ll get nothing else from me,” replied the woman. I found later that the bad cases—and I was placed in that category—on entering the asylum, were always addressed by the nurses by their Christian names; only the ladies in the convalescent ward were given their prefix of Mrs. or Miss.

The matron had visited the room before she went to bed. To my great relief she informed me that she slept quite near me. “Then you will protect me from harm, will you not? I am so afraid of these dreadful nurses, I have never seen any like them before,” I said.

“I will certainly protect you,” she replied, but I had little confidence in her assurance, for ought she not to have prevented me from being thrown into that icy cell, and have forbidden the nurses to have ill-used me?

I should say that not one of the patients got more

than two hours' troubled sleep out of the fourteen they spent in their bedrooms. All night the two attendants sewed, did fancy work, cut out garments, wrote letters, and every two or three hours a lantern was lighted, and one of the two set out on a tour of inspection, entering all the bedrooms of both male and female patients, every movement being as noisily made as possible.

At the head of my bedstead was a cupboard, which filled a recess, beside the fireplace, the top of which did duty as a shelf. In this cupboard the nurses kept butter and groceries; and at least four times during the night my bedstead was roughly jerked down from the bottom, quite a couple of feet into the room, in order to allow the attendant to get out food for one or other of the numerous meals dispatched during the night. The series of jerks attending this performance were alone sufficient to arouse the soundest sleeper, yet in the condition, physical and mental, I have described, I was ordered and expected to sleep! And because to do so was a physical impossibility, which neither doctor nor nurses themselves in my place could have accomplished, my ears were on two occasions soundly boxed. I was roughly shaken and terrified by frightful threats, which every moment, judging from what I had already experienced, and the scenes I had witnessed, I not unreasonably feared would be carried out. How *sane* is the so-called "treatment" of the insane, and the cure of insanity!

At 6 a.m. a dreadful racket commenced; the two remaining patients were ordered to get up, which one of them did at once; the other, an elderly woman, who did not instantly obey, was mercilessly dragged from her bed by one of the attendants, and the "chronics" who had been brought in the night before to be undressed now appeared to perform their ablutions. Two basins sufficed for the ten patients. Sponges, towels, soap and tooth-brushes—two of the latter sufficed for the one or two alone of the number who used them—were hopelessly mixed. The attendant was provided with a large piece of flannel, and that she used for each in turn, and I, who throughout my life had been most careful to keep my own toilet requisites entirely for my own use, looked on with nothing short of horror at that flannel, as it went the round of the ten women's faces and necks. One of the poor creatures, a gentle-voiced woman, who never ceased to talk to herself, was frightfully disfigured by some kind of eruption on her face. Large boils thickly covered the whole surface, which was a livid deep purple. Her diction and accent were very refined, but how I shuddered as I noticed that the joint-stock flannel, the same soap and towel were used for her as for the other patients, several of whom were almost equally repulsive in appearance!

The ablutions—which were of the most perfunctory character—over, the bundles of clothing were taken from the window and distributed. When all were

dressed, the attendants proceeded to comb out—O ! so roughly—the patients' hair and to dress it according to their ideas, which were of the simplest, and in the style that demanded the least time, utterly regardless of prevailing fashions—although their own coiffures were most elaborate and up-to-date—or of suitability to the individual.

When the last head had been roughly dressed, the poor creatures were dispatched to their ward, and I hoped that as I had been spared so far I should escape that dreadful flannel, the thought of which made me sick, but, to my great disgust, I was lifted uncereemoniously from the bed, and placed by the washstand, where I managed to maintain my equilibrium by holding on with what strength I possessed to the stand. I asked for my own loofah, sponge, etc., but was informed that no toilet requisites had been sent with me. This, however, was untrue; my bath sponge, large and nearly new, had been commandeered by somebody in the asylum, for I made inquiries later, which satisfactorily proved that it had been sent there, and the other things I found later. I was more than thankful to find that I had clean water—although horribly hard—a luxury that fell to the lot of only two or three out of the ten. The attendant dabbed my face with the awful flannel, against the use of which I protested as vigorously as my weak state permitted. My hands were subjected to a similar process, I was rubbed roughly with a wet towel,

inwardly revolting and shuddering. I was then placed on a chair whilst my miserable pallet—it was unworthy the name of bed—was made.

The dressing interlude had by no means calmed my fears. The noise, the shaking, the terrifying threats from the attendants to these poor helpless creatures who rarely resisted, but took the blows and scoldings as a matter of course, filled me with dreadful forebodings for my own future. Must I pass the rest of my life with such as these? I asked myself in despair. Shall I in time become like them? Was this awful fate to be mine? O! the torture of such a thought, the agony of it! I, in full possession of all my senses, to be made such as these. I had heard of sane people, who had been shut up in asylums, becoming insane from the horror of their surroundings. Well, I resolved that I would not, that I would prove my sanity, and get out of this awful house.

Then indignation filled my soul. Why, I asked myself, should these poor creatures be given no chance to recover from their mental illness? Were they sane, and suffering physically, no one would dare to degrade them to the level of the brutes, and to show them less consideration than the lowest animal receives from the hardest master. My soul revolted, as a free-born Englishwoman, from such a state of utter subjection, nay, slavery to these rough, coarse, ignorant, brutal women. Then I vowed to myself

that should I recover my physical health, and get away from the asylum, I would raise my feeble voice, and do what I could to show the sane how they allowed the insane to be made worse, instead of helping them to recover their reason. I am now, under many difficulties, fulfilling that vow.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE OBSERVATION ROOM

My bed being ready, I very thankfully got into it, for my weakness was truly dreadful. The room had now to be swept and prepared for the day. Heavy coal-boxes were thrown from one side of the fire-place to the other; the big fire was raked entirely out, a tremendous smoke and dust filling the room in consequence. Brushes and dustpans were thrown noisily on the floor and such a dust raised in sweeping that I was almost smothered with it and the smoke. During these operations the attendant never ceased to grumble loudly at me because I had not slept. I assured her that if I had occupied my own room I should have enjoyed twenty hours' sleep, so much was I in need of it, but that to sleep in that room was a feat I should never accomplish if I remained there twenty years. She threatened to report me to the doctor and to the matron, and to punish my obstinacy in a hundred different ways, which exordium by no means added to my feeling of security, and this alone would have permitted me to indulge in my longing for even one half-hour's blessed sleep.

Breakfast was brought in at 8 a.m. Bread and milk for me, bread and butter for the day nurse, who now replaced the night nurses, and a skinny, most unappetizing kippered herring, which she promptly consigned to the flames, and, judging from its appearance, this was the best place for it.

At ten a.m. the assistant doctor made his appearance, accompanied by the matron. The medical superintendent, I was informed, was absent for a few days. This assistant was a brawny individual, clean shaven, rather over thirty years of age, and with a very unprofessional appearance.

"Good morning," he said. "Have you slept?"

"Indeed, I have not," I replied. "How could I in this room, under such conditions? I shall never sleep here."

The doctor took no notice of my remarks, and his next question certainly took me by surprise.

"Are you a Protestant?" he inquired.

I paused for a moment, the question was so unexpected.

"I was," I replied guardedly. "But why do you ask?"

He replied by another question: "Do you know Phil May?"

"Not personally," I answered, "but, of course, I know his sketches and cartoons."

"Are you a doctor?" I queried, for his questions and manner were so utterly unlike those of the medical

men to whom I had always been accustomed that I began to doubt the matron's statement that he was a doctor.

"Certainly," he replied.

"Then, will you get me out of this awful place? It is an asylum, I am sure."

"It is not," he replied. "You are doing a rest-cure, and require quiet." (Quiet, indeed; the very opposite was liberally provided for me.)

"O! let me go; I cannot stay here," I cried, "it is too awful."

"You are not well enough to be moved," he said. "You will go home as soon as you recover." (How many hundreds of times did I hear that cold comfort addressed to patients during my seventeen weeks in that asylum!)

"When will that be?" I asked anxiously.

"That depends on yourself; if you do not worry about your home, or business matters, or anything, but go to sleep, you will soon get well."

"But coming here has ruined me. I cannot afford to pay. I ought not to be here. O! *Do*, I pray, I beseech you, let me go away. Who can, who will help me to go away?" I cried.

The assistant took no further notice of me, but commenced an irrelevant conversation with the matron.

His visit the next day, and the day after that, when I, on each occasion, asked to be given brown bread—which, however, I never got—was of a similar nature.

Not one question related to my health, mental or physical, and I soon found that I must reorganize my ideas of a medical man's visit to suit my new surroundings. In the world a doctor approaches his patient with a soft tread, and a grave pre-occupied air, which alone is impressive, as doubtless he intends it shall be ; he feels the patient's pulse, silently, for some minutes or seconds, looks at the tongue, and makes inquiries of nurse or relatives with regard to the patient's condition, appetite, etc., and often sits a few minutes with a desponding one or for perhaps a quarter of an hour.

But all this is changed in an asylum. There is no need there for a professional air, a soft tread, an anxious manner, and questions to nurses or attendants. The doctors—as I saw them—pass through the wards with a nod to a patient here, or a remark to another there, often of a scoffing nature, and an utter indifference—which no pains were taken to hide—to the complaints, or illnesses of their patients.

I think I can claim to have proved utter indifference on the part of the doctor to my state of health in the treatment I have described, which was nothing less than criminal, in the state I was when I arrived at the asylum ; consequently I may be allowed to have formed a fairly correct estimate of the doctors' attitude towards their patients in the matter of the note of contempt and scorn as well as the indifference to their health to which I have alluded.

The second night passed much as the first, with the exception that there was no wrestling, and that the poor, old, deformed patient occupied her bed during that and the following nights I spent in that room. She had a dreadful cold, the result of exposure to the freezing cold in the cell, but that was an indisposition too slight to be noticed by the staff, and inconvenienced only the sufferer and the other patients, in her immediate proximity, and they were naturally of not sufficient importance to be considered.

Every morning about five o'clock one of the nurses wrote a report of the occurrences of the night in a book. The second morning she said to me in a harsh, threatening voice, "I shall put a black note against you, you tiresome baggage; you've kept the whole room awake all night. I'll tell the matron what a row you've made."

"I have made no noise," I replied, "and I am longing to sleep; but how can I in this glare of light, in the noise that goes on, in this uncomfortable bed, and in this stuffy, suffocating room?"

"Bother your bed! It's good enough for such as you." Then she shouted to the other attendant: "'Ere's this woman a-grumbling about her bed, nurse!"

"Better let us have none of your sarcasm, nor none of your impudence," said the other to me, "or you'll be up in they 'pads' before you're five minutes older."

I was destined to hear the word sarcasm very often

during my sojourn in that "Temple of Health." It was a stock word of the attendants, who had not the slightest idea of its meaning, but used it to silence the complaints of the patients without the merest regard to its suitability.

Ruthlessly turning my sore body over to the wall, and tightening the bed-clothes over me, the woman harshly bade me sleep until the other patients dressed, but terror, combined with the pain in my arms from the twisting they had received at the "Home," and in the cell, the intense pain in my joints from the exposure to the cold of the cell, my cough and the restlessness of the other patients, who were often dragged from their beds and the room by the attendants, the pain in my mouth and throat and the agony of mind I endured, were quite sufficient to prevent the cloak of sleep from enveloping me.

The fourth morning I was visited by the superintendent for quite four minutes. "You are better," he said, in his jerky way. "Why do you not sleep?"

I again replied that sleep under present conditions was impossible, that if I were in my own house I could sleep for a week.

"You are worrying," said the doctor. "You must not do that."

"I can't help it," I replied. "I am ruined in health and pocket. You are a doctor, you can send me away. O! I cannot, cannot stay in this dreadful house. I want to go away. I must go away."

"You will go when you are better, and if you sleep you will get better," and with that he hurried out of the room.

It was always the same. The doctor never inquired as to my health. He simply told me to eat, to sleep, and not to worry, in his hurried, jerky manner, which gave the impression that, like the attendants, he had no time to give to such insignificant individuals as his patients.

The third day I sat in a chair for an hour or two, and as the woman had sent my teeth, I was able to eat some minced mutton and mashed potatoes, with some milk pudding for dinner. It tasted very good, for I was thoroughly tired of the "eternal bread and butter" which had formed every meal hitherto, neither of which was good of its kind, and the bread was cut in thick clumsy slices.

"Do you never have anything but bread and butter and bread and cheese to eat here?" I had inquired of the attendant the evening before. "I am sick of it, and should like some chicken broth for my supper."

A loud guffaw greeted this request.

"You won't get chicken broth here, my lady," she replied. "You'll find you'll have to eat the eternal bread and butter, or go without."

I had already discovered that there was no such thing in that establishment as invalid diet; the one and only approach to it was Bovril, which, on rare occasions, was given to patients who were very, very

ill. None, however, was given to me. Indeed, the second night bread and cheese, the usual supper for all, was sent me also, although I had no teeth natural or artificial with which to masticate it, and my gums were far too soft and pappy to properly eat the softest crumb of bread. In my own house I should as soon have thought of eating a brick-bat, as bread and cheese for my evening meal, on account of my feeble digestion, but here such a thing as a digestion was the last thing studied. However, I refused to eat the bread and cheese, and a tea-cup full of milk was, with the utmost difficulty procured, even the nurse agreeing that I " 'ad no teeth to eat cheese with."

For the eight days and nights I spent in that room I was never alone.

"I ain't goin' to lose sight o' *you*, my lady," said one of the attendants, when I suggested one afternoon that she might leave me.

"I should sleep if I did not feel that I was being watched," I said. "It is to me dreadful, never to be alone. I am not accustomed to be watched like a thief day and night."

The reason for this close watching was that my sister had most untruthfully represented me as suicidal. Yet the thought of taking my life never once entered my head then, or at any time during the five weeks I spent in the "Home," or the three days and nights when alone in my own house, previous to my visit to the relative I have named. Neither of the

doctors, nor the woman at the "Home" mentioned any such tendency on my part; only the malice of my sister suggested the untruthful statement in order to secure for me the severest treatment.

From the moment I was hustled into the blanket at the asylum and thrown into the cell, I incessantly begged doctors, attendants and patients not to ill-use, but to protect me from violence; and if the truth were told by either of these, this statement would be endorsed. Had I been anxious to die, I should have hailed with delight a deliverance from my misery, which hourly seemed greater than I could bear, and from the fearful dread of what I might at any moment suffer at the hands of the attendants who fifty times a day threatened my life, and their cruelty left me in no doubt but that they were fully capable of carrying out their threats.

But, as the days went on, and I was neither roasted alive, dropped into a well, nor killed in any other way, I began to think that perhaps the strange, rough women, whose ideas of sick-nursing were so extraordinary, so utterly unlike anything I had previously experienced, might, after all, not prove to be red-handed murderers; and that it was unwise to keep myself awake, starting with terror at every sound; so it happened that when one of the attendants in whom I had, from her gentler manner and kinder speech, some confidence, sat with me, as she unfortunately did only a couple of hours in the afternoon,

that if the room were quiet, I allowed myself to fall asleep, but not for one second did I lose consciousness during those awful nights. From this particular attendant I afterwards received much kindness, and I shall ever think of her gratefully.

Every day at the same hour I heard the sound of a pianola, which played the same tune. I inquired where the sounds proceeded from, and was told that it was the ladies playing in the drawing-room near at hand.

"You will soon be able to go with them," the nurse continued.

"Indeed," I replied, "I could not see strangers with my cropped head." (Oh! What bitter pain, needlessly added to my other sufferings, the loss of my abundant locks cost me!)

"You will soon get used to short hair," said the woman, "and yours is curly, it does not look so bad." But I knew better, and "lean and ill-favoured" as I felt myself to be, with my protruding bones, my shrunken face, and my ghastly pallor, I shrank from seeing "ladies!" But food, although of the plainest, and consisting mostly of milk and eternal white bread and butter, which I took four or five times daily, was beginning to tell. I already felt stronger, I had no headache—indeed throughout my illness I had been remarkably free from pain of any kind in the head—and every hour my head became clearer, as the effects of the awful drugging wore off, and if I could only

have slept each night, I should have recovered rapidly.

The fourth day, the Superintendent seemed astonished at my progress.

"Have you no headache?" he asked.

I replied in the negative, and stated that I had been remarkably free throughout my illness. I besought every time I saw the doctor or matron that I might leave my wretched bed.

"I have been six weeks in bed," I pleaded, "I am so tired of it; it is so uncomfortable all my bones ache. Let me get up and go outside, I am longing for a breath of fresh air." I was told to sleep, to eat, and not to worry. "You will go when you are well," everybody said, but nobody fixed a date for my release.

The matron came to my room once or twice daily. She always said she was very busy and had no "time" to spare to talk to me. Her visits were of little comfort, for I felt that she ought to be able to prevent such scenes as I nightly witnessed in that room, and to pay more attention to the needs and comfort of the patients.

On the third and succeeding days I was visited, about tea-time, by an old lady, whose quaint dress and speech reminded me of some of the elderly women in an old illustrated edition of Dickens' my father had possessed. Indeed, nothing struck me more, when I went to the convalescent ward, than the early

Victorian fashions that met me in nearly all the old ladies. Styles of dress and coiffures brought back vividly my childhood. Fashions I had known forty years before were still *à la mode*, in this strange corner of the world, where an unkind Fate had so cruelly cast me.

I liked this particular old lady very much, and her speech brought a homely atmosphere into the room that held such awful terrors for me. I had not heard the harsh "r's" of my native county for years, and they fell like music on my ears in these surroundings, so utterly unlike anything I had ever before dreamed of as existing.

Besides, she seemed really interested in me, and this was something so unusual, it was all the more gratifying. To doctors and nurses I was a "case," not a human being in any sense of the word. They seemed to overlook the fact that I was an individual, with feelings, tastes, or needs. They laboured to impress upon me that they had no time to waste on anything so unimportant as myself, and that to give trouble was the unforgiven and cardinal sin in their eyes. But this old lady was different. She sympathised with me in the loss of my hair, and drew from me an account of my sufferings in the "Home," which she said she could not believe possible.

I asked her how long she had been in this dreadful place. Twenty-five years was her reply, which caused my somewhat revived spirits to go down to zero.

Twenty-five years of companionship with those poor creatures whose pitiable state moved me to the deepest compassion! Twenty-five years of association with those coarse, ignorant, brutal women! How had she, an educated, accomplished woman—she was a first-rate musician, I found later—how had she lived through them? Should I have to spend that number of years here, if I lived so long? Death at the hands of the attendants would be a thousand times to be preferred, I concluded.

She said she could not understand why I so feared being hurt or killed.

“Have these women never ill-treated you?” I inquired.

“Never,” she replied, “nor will they you.”

But I had seen and experienced their cruelty and was not to be convinced.

“I wish you need not go away,” I said. “Perhaps these women will not hurt me if you are here.”

“They have not harmed me in twenty-five years,” she said; “why should they you? Why, this is like my home now, and you will soon think of it as yours.” *I* ever think of this awful place as home! Why the very use of the word in such a connection was a desecration! But I did not utter my thoughts aloud.

“How did you get here,” I asked. “Had you ever a home of your own?”

“I came here because, like you, I was ill,” she replied, “and I gave up my home when I came.”

"Have you never left this place for twenty-five years?"

"O! yes, for short visits to my relatives, nearly all of whom are now dead. One of my nieces still comes to see me sometimes."

Why she had got here I could not imagine. She had, as far as I could see, no delusions, no mania, but talked as reasonably and sensibly as any one I had ever met in the world.

Later I found that she had suffered from religious mania, and had once left the asylum cured. But the malady had returned, and she had again been placed here. Now she appeared to have no wish to leave the place. Indeed, she would have been sadly missed by many of the worst cases, among whom she insisted on living. The matron assured me that she had many times endeavoured to persuade her to live in the convalescent ward, but in vain. She sometimes went for a day or two, but came back again to No. 2.

There she read to the patients, and tried to interest them in fancy-work, at all kinds of which she was an adept, and in every way in her power endeavoured to bring some alleviation to their sad lot. And there is no doubt that this despised lunatic's labour of love was as acceptable in the sight of One who judges, not as men judge, as that of the noblest enthusiast who exiles himself to spread the gospel among the heathen. At any rate, the need for her ministrations was as great, if not greater, than in the case of the most

degraded heathen. Whether this old lady still lives I know not, but I shall ever remember gratefully her sympathy and kind interest, which was as refreshing to me as water to the parched and weary traveller in the heart of the desert of Sahara.

One afternoon, another patient from the same ward brought me my tea, or rather afternoon milk. She had the most dreadful-staring eyes I had ever seen, and to look at her made me shudder. Poor thing! She had, before coming to the asylum, undergone an operation for cancer and suffered cruelly, being always in pain. She was not a favourite with the attendants and was always most harshly treated.

The old lady I liked told me some time after I left the observation room that she expected every morning to hear that I had passed away during the night, so ill did I appear to her to be! She was so astonished, too, to find when she saw me dressed that I was above medium height.

"Your face was so tiny, so hollow, your body so emaciated, it looked no bigger than that of a child of ten in the bed," she said. "I imagined you to be not over four feet."

Every day the Superintendent pronounced me better. "I am getting the drugs out of you by degrees," said the doctor, "but that will take at least a week," in reply to my urgent request to leave my miserable pallet, "and for that time you must stay where you are."

And, indeed, I was not in a fit state to move. The powerful medicines the doctor gave me took terrible effect on my weakened system, and my condition for several days was indescribable in its misery and pain. Nor do I think the doctor would have given me the strong medicine he did had he examined me more carefully when I entered his "Temple." Every day, however, my brain became clearer, and every day I realized with added force my terrible position.

Doctors, attendants, matron, patients all assured me that my recovery depended on myself entirely.

"You must try to get well," they said, "we can't make you well. You can only do that yourself."

This, I found, was the formula used for every patient. Those in authority over them washed their hands completely of them as far as helping them to recover was concerned. Recovery was placed entirely in the patient's hands, they only were responsible; the doctors and nurses had no duties in that respect towards their charges. Indeed, it seemed to me that their only duty was to place every possible obstacle in the way of their getting well, and if one such an asylum exists as I describe, it is quite reasonable to assume that there are many others that resemble it. Let any doubter enter an asylum, as a patient, and in order to secure the worst possible treatment, I should suggest that a bad record be taken. In visiting an asylum casually nothing would be remarked of an unusual nature. For instance, a very old lady,

considerably over seventy, who was intensely musical, and who played beautifully still, to my surprise took music lessons from a young lady who came from the nearest town about once a fortnight. The teacher and pupil took a cosy tea in a tiny room leading into the drawing-room in which stood the beautiful instrument the old lady had brought with her, and which was her property. Taking tea in this way, the young teacher doubtless left the asylum fully persuaded that the old lady's lines had fallen in pleasant places, and that a lunatic asylum was not half a bad place; for the attendants can use very endearing terms, and soften their language and voices when speaking to their charges before a relative or visitor, who would refuse to believe, judging from what he or she saw, that the treatment and language I have described could be possible.

But could that visitor enter as a bad case, a change would come over the spirit of his opinion, and he would readily agree that if I have erred it has certainly not been in exaggerating the brutality of the so-called "treatment" in present-day asylums, for I did not see the wards in which were the chronics and worst cases, but I heard from patients what they had suffered there.

On the sixth morning I was so sleepy I could barely keep my eyes open, and I thought that as the patients had filed in to be dressed the attendants would be too busy to injure me in any way, therefore I might

for a few minutes give way to the overpowering desire for sleep that I had felt all through the night. I, accordingly, although in a most uncomfortable position—I was waiting my turn to be led to the washstand for my morning dabbing with that awful flannel, and feared a reprimand, if I were not instantly ready—fell into a profound sleep from which, in less than ten minutes, I was aroused by the attendant.

“Why are you sleeping now?” she demanded. “’Adn’t you hall the night to sleep in. You’ve gone to sleep now just to give me extra trouble, I know your ways.”

“Indeed, I have not,” I replied. “I am so sleepy that if I felt secure from injury I could sleep for a week on a plank.”

Yet throughout the next and following nights fear and terror banished sleep.

I suppose that as the days went on the attendants reported that I showed no homicidal or suicidal tendencies, that I spoke rationally, that I was perfectly quiet, and that my strength was gradually returning. Indeed, to my great surprise after my dreadful sufferings, I felt stronger every day, yet I would gladly have glided into eternity, for what had life to offer me now? One of the patients, who shared my room, interested me deeply from the moment I first saw her until I left her, which I did with the greatest regret. How I longed a thousand times in a day to give that harried, worried, tormented girl a chance to recover!

On the fourth day this patient ascended as usual to the unknown regions above me. At twelve o'clock she was brought down by an attendant who undressed her and put her to bed.

"She has been over-eating," said the attendant. "I knew she'd be bad when I saw her stuffing at breakfast."

The poor girl was crying bitterly, some medicine was given her, which in a short time brought on fearful sickness.

"Of course she gives all the trouble she can," said one of the attendants, as it became necessary to change her clothes and sheets. The poor girl was always most courteous, and as soon as she could speak expressed her regret that she had made me feel ill too.

"I am so sorry for that lady," she repeated again and again.

"You ain't sorry for me, though," said the attendant.

Great was my surprise, not a quarter of an hour after the violent sickness, to see an attendant approach the girl's bed with a plate on which was a liberal allowance of greasy, minced mutton, strongly flavoured with onions, and some mashed potatoes, which, I found afterwards, was the only invalid dish prepared in this "Temple," and of which I had myself partaken every day. The girl ceased her sobs, and assured the attendants that she could not eat it.

"Now, none 'o your nonsense, because I'll not stand it," said the attendant, and with that she began to feed the girl, who was compelled to take the very last spoonful, and a portion of rice pudding afterwards.

"Well," I remarked, "you have curious ideas of sick-nursing here! I should never have thought it possible that such food could be given by a nurse to a patient immediately after violent sickness."

"None of your sarcasm, my lady, or you'll be wishing you'd held your tongue," said the nurse.

"But I have had much experience in nursing, and I understand invalid dietary," I objected.

"Then keep what you knows to yourself, we ain't a-goin' to have none on 't 'ere," was the reply.

And I soon learned that if speech was silver in the world, silence was certainly golden in an asylum, yet I did not cease to observe.

The girl remained in bed as long as I did, and I found afterwards that an attendant being sent, as was frequently the case, to nurse an outside patient, for the doctor had a house and a practice in the nearest town, and as one remained all day with me, the staff being but limited, there was not one available to take charge of this girl had she remained up; so she was put to bed and kept there, not because her health demanded it, but because there was no attendant for her, although she paid a considerable sum yearly for a special one, as she was considered dangerous.

Just after this incident a lady I had not before seen entered the room. Friendships are as common inside as outside asylums, and this lady had the warmest affection for the poor girl. Her name was Miss Devise, and she talked soothingly and affectionately to the girl, who besought her to take her home.

"When shall I go to mother and Isabel?" was her cry night and day.

"When you are well, dear. You must try to get well; you can if you try." For this lady had acquired the asylum formula, and exhorted all the patients to cure themselves.

Sometimes the girl would withdraw herself from her friend's encircling arms, and exclaim: "Why am I kept in this awful house? I have a home, and a sister—why can I not go to them? I shall be killed here. I feel I am getting worse, for I am ordered about as though I were a child, yet I am twenty-seven! I will not bear it. You are as false as the rest of the people here; I have lost all faith in you!"

Poor girl, her home was but six miles away, and there a tender mother longed for her beloved and loving child, but what a gulf divided those two!

CHAPTER IX

THE CONVALESCENT WARD

At length a week passed. I had sat up for an hour or two each day, for several days, and at each visit the doctors pronounced me better "now that the drugs were out of me."

"You'll soon be going upstairs," said the nice attendant on the afternoon of the sixth day. "Aren't you glad?"

"I am glad to leave this horrid bed," I replied, "but with my cropped head I cannot see strangers."

And, indeed, the pain of the loss of my abundant locks never left me. Miss Devise, on her frequent visits to the poor girl, did her best to cheer me, and now she said :

"You need not fear seeing strangers; we are quite in the country here."

This lady's position in the house had puzzled me from the first.

"Does Miss Devise eat that food?" I inquired one day, as the attendant turned over a particularly unappetizing-looking dinner which had been brought her, and which she sent away almost untasted.

"Of course she does, and thankful to get it," was the reply.

"And does she eat the eternal bread and butter?"

"Yes, and without grumbling as you do."

"Then she is very silly, if she pays for good food," I replied. "All my life I have been accustomed to plain, but good, well-cooked food, and such a dinner as that sent you would give me fearful indigestion. Since my serious illness ten years ago, I have had to carefully diet myself."

The attendant laughed long and loud. "You'll get no dieting here," she replied, when she could command her voice. "If you can't eat what's put before you, you'll have to learn to live without eating, and my advice to you is to eat and not grumble."

I noticed, however, that the attendants seldom eat the food sent them, and this did not surprise me, for such coarse, ill-cooked, unappetizing meals I had never before seen in my life. To me, however, they praised everything, and threatened and scolded every time I asked for some simple dish, for a cup of broth, or an egg, which ought to have been provided as a matter of course.

On the seventh morning the Superintendent said to the attendant then in my room, who was one of the three who had so unceremoniously hustled me to the cell, and who was less brutal than the woman Stiles, but still far from possessing any kindly feeling towards her hapless charges.

"Miss Hamilcar had better sleep to-night in the cubicle room. It will be quieter there. She may get up and go upstairs."

"O! doctor," I implored, "don't send me with those poor creatures who come into this room. I am not insane, but if I have always to be with those poor things I shall become so. Don't degrade me still further. I suffered so much in that dreadful 'Home' or I should never have been sent here. I am not, I never have been, insane. I cannot live with those who are."

"Take her and Miss Needes"—the poor girl who shared the room by day—"to the lounge," said the doctor, as he hurried away.

At this the attendant looked very far from pleased. "Make haste," she said, "and get up, I can't stay here all day with you."

"Why are you angry that I am going out of this horrible room?" I asked. "You ought to be glad that you won't have to come and sit so many hours with me."

But that was the very reason why the attendant was angry. As I lay perfectly passive, speaking only occasionally, and giving no trouble whatever, she had been able to spend very quiet, pleasant afternoons, and to read or to sew at her ease. Her work, which lay with the worst cases, was much more trying, and she was sorry to give up the easier task of watching me; and when Miss Needes was brought down Miss

Devise often spent the whole afternoon with her, quite relieving the nurse, so the latter was free to take her ease, of which she resented the loss. When the attendants came in and out they always asked the nurse on duty how she got on. The invariable reply was, "It is very monotonous"—(I suppose I provided them with less "sport" than patients generally)—"but quiet, and I don't mind."

When I was dressed, and the operation took some time, for I was so weak I could scarcely stand alone, with the aid of the nurse's strong arm, I mounted the two narrow, steep staircases, and found myself in a large conservatory, which was furnished as a lounge sitting-room.

This structure was a lean-to built on to the principal building. Perhaps a yard or two from it rose a steep bank, the side of a hill, which towered above the asylum. The bank completely shut out any view, and left only a strip of sky above. There was a very flimsy brick wall about three feet high and windows on one side precisely like those of a conservatory. A glass door and glass partition at one end opened into a greenhouse, which led to the doctor's house, and a glass door, also in a glass partition, opened into the garden at the other.

The roof of the structure was of common glass, and as, except for the low wall and that of the house to which it was attached, the whole structure was of the same material, the extremes of cold and heat were

arctic and tropical. It was heated by pipes, but as they were not hot until nearly mid-day the cold up till that time was unbearable, and I suffered cruelly, for my emaciated body had neither flesh nor blood to warm it. As the spring advanced the heat was equally trying—the structure faced due south—and the thermometer often rose to 120° Fahr. on a spring noon, but when we passed through it on our way to breakfast at 8 a.m. it was rarely over 30°. The intense cold of the bare polished floor chilled my feet so completely that they remained like lumps of ice for days together, nor could I warm them during the night. My hands, too, were always icy cold. During heavy storms of rain this lounge was literally flooded, so flimsy was the thin roof.

To the left of the conservatory was a square lawn, round which a walk had been made. High walls surrounded this lawn on three sides, on the fourth the house projected on to it, and it was round and round this dismal path that the convalescent patients took all the exercise they were supposed to need.

On the wall to which this conservatory was built was a flight of some half-dozen wooden steps, which led by a glass door into the drawing-room; then came a small alcove, raised a foot perhaps above the floor, and in which stood a piano, a wicker and another chair. This alcove became my favourite seat, for the hot pipes passed through a cupboard at its furthest end, and in this cupboard I was accustomed to thrust

my frozen feet, mostly in a vain endeavour to thaw them. Next the alcove was a door, half of glass; this opened into the dining-room, which was very low and dark, faced north, and commanded a view, as did the drawing-room, over an extensive tract of hill and dale. The former was not a cold room, but the patients were supposed to use it only for meals. The good fire in the grate, however, had an irresistible attraction for me, and whenever I could I warmed my starved, frigid, and almost lifeless frame. That one fire was the only approach to comfort the house offered. The drawing-room, which opened out of it, was so constructed that the four winds of Heaven met and careered wildly through it. Four doors, two of which were always open when patients occupied the room, and three windows facing the cruel north-east admitted the blast, which seemed to me to come from polar regions.

A fire was generally lighted here in the evening, but even when seated immediately before it, to feel warm was impossible. Yet the room was comfortably, if not well, furnished, and displayed some taste in its colour and arrangement. Two good sofas and several armchairs, a well-filled bookcase—the contents of which were evidently chosen to suit lunatic tastes, and were very poor and disappointing—and a little good old china, gave the room a home-like appearance. In summer its sunless aspect made it a pleasant retreat from the excessive heat of the lounge, but in winter it was cruelly cold.

The lounge was used—except when the weather was too hot—for the only religious service held in the asylum on Tuesday afternoons, when the Vicar of the nearest village gave the most extraordinary addresses I ever heard from the lips of any clergyman of the Church of England. Indeed, I refused for a long time to believe that he could belong to the Established Church, and how he got a living I shall never be able to understand. Neither of the doctors nor the matron ever attended these amazing services.

The male patients were brought from an adjoining building, and so oppressive was the air of the lounge in winter that the Vicar frequently shortened the service, which rarely lasted three-quarters of an hour. Of course, the condition of the air mattered not at all for the patients; they were of no account, and never by any chance were taken into consideration by the authorities. Most certainly this conservatory was not a fit or proper place in which human beings might spend the greater part of every day, nor would sane people have been put into it; but the insane have no choice in the matter of their surroundings, healthy or the opposite—these are determined on by the doctor and circumstances, and if these latter should be unsuitable, so much the worse for the poor lunatics. To complain would not mend matters, it would only bring about a much worse state of affairs.

For instance, the friends of a patient depend entirely on the doctor's report of their relative's mental

condition, and it lies in his—the doctor's—power to misrepresent, or to give a true account of the patient's improvement or retrogradation. The patient's letters to his relatives may be as sensible as the doctor's, sometimes even more so, yet these would not be sufficient evidence to prove his sanity, or rather, is not by outsiders accepted as sufficient proof. A patient who complained with perfect justice of the cruel treatment, the bad food, his unhealthy or insanitary surroundings, of his unjust detention, may even if he has quite recovered, be at the doctor's discretion, and as a punishment for one, any or all of these offences, be removed from the convalescent ward and placed with the worst cases. What chance or opportunity have the friends of knowing the true state of the patient's mind? *Absolutely none.* The doctor could—and does—in such a case merely reply to the relatives' enquiry, that he had with regret been compelled to send the patient back to the lower ward, and that he was not in a fit state to leave the asylum. The patient is helpless, so are his friends, there is no authority to whom either can appeal, but there ought to be. Three men have to send a man or woman into an asylum, but only one lets him out. The law that hedges the lunatic so completely about makes no provision for his receiving justice, or the value of his money, if he be a paying patient. It places him securely in the power of the doctor, and then washes its hands completely of him.

The lunatic may state his case to the commissioners, but before replying to him they communicate with the doctor, who needs merely to reply that the patient's complaints are a delusion, and that instead of improving in mental health, he could not be kept in the convalescent ward on account of his form of insanity, consequently he has been sent to a lower one. The commissioners, therefore, write to the despairing lunatic, that on due enquiry they find that his complaints are groundless, and his charges not substantiated, therefore they can go no further in the matter; and the last state of that poor lunatic is much worse than the first. The doctor can bring forward his assistant doctors and attendants, all of whom are quite ready to corroborate any statement made by their superior. But what witness has the lunatic? Only fellow patients, who are less than nobodies, and dead in the eyes of the law. That one man should possess the unlimited power over a number of his fellow-creatures as that placed in the hands of the medical superintendent of an asylum is bad for him, for it makes a little god of him, and much worse for his patients. It is abused every day in the year, and is one of the reasons why our asylums are so full to-day. Sweep it away and replace it by justice, common-sense, and humanity, and there will be fewer lunatics by thousands than at present.

But this is a digression. In the lounge I noticed some half-dozen patients, and one in particular who

had been a frequent visitor to the observation room. She had hurt her ankle by a fall, and was now attempting to walk with the aid of a croquet mallet, which did duty for a stick, but no remedies of any sort were applied to the foot by the matron or doctor. Poor thing! She suffered badly from rheumatism, and had been transferred from some other asylum, where she later assured me she had enjoyed better health. She was a Welshwoman, and spoke English with an accent, and during her frequent attacks talked her native Celtic, although she would assure us, when well, that she had quite forgotten it. I sat for some time in a basket-chair unnoticed, scarcely able to speak, so exhausted was I from the exertion of dressing and walking upstairs; but how rapturously I inhaled the fresh, though icy, air that came in through an open window. Sitting behind me was a patient of perhaps forty years. She was sobbing bitterly. Like poor Miss Needes she wept from morning till night, and often throughout the night. After a time she left her chair and came and stood before me.

"How thin you are!" I assented.

"Have you ever been in an asylum before?"

"Is this really an asylum?" I asked, my last shred of hope disappearing.

"They told you 'twas a 'Home,' and you were doing a rest-cure, didn't they?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied, "and although I did not believe them, yet I hoped they were telling the truth."

"The truth!" she repeated scornfully. "You'll

never hear that here. Lies, lies, lies! Doctors, matron, nurses, all tell 'em by hundreds. They're not nurses any more than you and me, but we've got to call 'em so though, and not one of 'em ever saw the inside of a hospital, or ever had five minutes' training!"

"How long have you been here?" I asked.

"Over a year, and if I had not been so brutally treated I should have got well long ago. Now I can't get well, and I don't want to."

"People never get away from an asylum if once they get in, I have always heard. Have any gone away from here since you came?" I asked anxiously, for I had hoped that, now I could leave my bed, I could get away in a day or two, but my spirits that had risen somewhat from the change of scene dropped down to zero.

"One or two went to their homes, and some were sent to other asylums. Have you got any relatives who will take you when you are well enough to go?"

"No," I said; "my relatives will do all in their power to keep me here." And after events proved how fully justified I was in this conviction which had never left me from the moment I quitted the "Home." And then I thought of the old lady who had spent twenty-five years in this awful place, and felt that I could not bear the thought of even one month.

"But you won't be here long," remarked my interlocutor, as I did not continue the conversation.

"Why do you think that?" I asked eagerly.

"Because you are quiet and won't give 'em any trouble. I shouldn't think there's much the matter with you."

"If you mean that I am not suffering mentally, then certainly there is not much the matter with me, but I have been very ill, and am so still."

"I never saw anybody so thin and look so bad and be about," she replied; "but you must be a great deal better, for the matron and nurses all said you were dying, and we none of us ever thought we should see you."

"They certainly did not treat me as a dying person," I replied.

"I know," she answered. "I have been through it all. I slept in that padded room for over a month; I believe because they was so full up, they had no bed for me." Then she began sobbing and crying.

"Don't cry so; you will spoil your eyesight, and make yourself ill."

"I can't help it," she said, "when I think of my home, my husband, and my beautiful children, that I've ruined by coming here."

Her sobs moved me to pity, for surely there can be no sadder sight on this earth than a mother in a lunatic asylum weeping for her children; and I forgot my own anxieties for a time in listening to this poor mother's story of her illness, and sufferings at the hands of the callous attendants.

When the outside clock struck one, two old ladies, who might have stepped out of the pages of one of Dickens' books, came into the lounge. One was tall, and when young must have been graceful and very attractive; the other was one of the funniest-looking old women I have ever seen. She was barely four feet in height, and very fat. Her face was almost circular, and her features were large and coarse, her mouth especially so, for the thick under-lip fell loosely. Her double chin rested on her bosom, for her very large head, the scanty hair of which was dressed in an ancient fashion, was too heavy for even her massive frame to support.

She wore a large old-fashioned pocket, attached to her waist, which appeared to be well filled with a variety of articles as miscellaneous as those dear to the heart of most schoolboys. She drew from its voluminous depths a dinner serviette, neatly folded, and held together with a ring.

She approached me at once, for a stranger in an asylum is an object of much interest to the inmates, who see no one, stroking my dress with a large, but shapely hand.

"How pretty your dress is!" she remarked. "I suppose it is quite fashionable, for I have never seen anything like it here."

The other lady then came to my chair.

"My name is historic," she said, "although that does not count for much in a place like this. I am

Miss ——," and she named one of England's most honoured patriots, whose direct descendant surely deserved a better fate than twenty-seven years' incarceration in various private asylums.

"We welcome you," she continued, "to our Cradlearium, and I predict that you will become a distinguished member of our community. You will not, however, shed the light of your amiable countenance upon us for any length of time; you will soon leave us. I am an old hand, my dear. I know the signs, there is not much the matter with you."

A gong sounded from the dining-room, and Miss Blanke (as I will call her) held out a hand to the fat old lady. "Come along, dear," she said cheerily; "you know you have wanted your dinner for a long time."

Then, seeing that I staggered from weakness as I rose from my chair, she said kindly, "Let me help you, don't be afraid to lean on me, I can support your fragile form, and lead you safely to your seat in the dining-room."

There I found the matron, two "nurses," and about eight patients, though the number often rose to eighteen. I was assigned a seat next the attendant, and that I occupied throughout my sojourn in the "Temple."

I noticed that the linen cloth was clean and a fairly good one and well laundered, the plates and dishes were coarse and exceedingly heavy; the silver and

cutlery fairly good. Only two or three of the patients were favoured with serviettes, but a clean one was placed near my plate. There was a remarkable scarcity of glasses, then and always, but the matron passed me hers, for I was inordinately thirsty. The water, however, was horrid to the taste, and had the flavour of smoky rainwater. When I first tasted it, I asked the attendant to give me some fresh spring water, as I could not drink what she had brought.

"You'll have to drink this," was the reply, "or go thirsty. We haven't got no other, and if it's good enough for we 'tis for you, so drink it, and let's have no more grumbling about it."

But I never could take the water with any feeling of security or enjoyment, it was so unpalatable, and so hard, yet so thirsty was I that I several times emptied my glass.

My sad thoughts as I looked round this table and realized, with even greater force than before, my dreadful position, robbed me of all desire for food, even had the coarse, badly-cooked fare not have sickened me.

My plate was removed, with its unappetizing contents scarcely touched. But I was not singular in this respect. Good appetites were evidently not the rule in this "Temple of Health," the matron and attendants being no exception, and certainly not setting an example to the patients to make a meal.

I was quite surprised to find that so much interest

in current topics was taken by the majority of the patients. Miss Blanke took a *Daily Mail*, and eagerly recounted, for the benefit of the company in general, the events of the day before as recorded by that popular newspaper. This lady was good-nature itself, and lent her paper to any one who cared to read it, only stipulating that it should not be torn, but passed on in the evening to one of the gentlemen patients. I gladly availed myself of the privilege extended to me, and its daily perusal is one of the very few pleasing incidents I can look back upon during my seventeen weeks' detention in that house of sighs and moans and tears, and this I owed not to the Superintendent, nor to his staff, but to a fellow-patient.

Our mid-day dinner was not a lengthy affair, and a return was soon made to the lounge. Several of the patients assisted in removing the plates, etc., and also later in washing them in the pantry near at hand, to which service the "nurses" made no objection, for it very considerably lightened one of the duties they particularly disliked. Indeed, they often asked the patients' help in this and the other domestic duties, which they were expected to fulfil in addition to their charge of the patients.

Mrs. Edge, who first addressed me, never helped, unless peremptorily commanded to carry out a pile of plates by an attendant, and then she did so with as much unwillingness as she dared to show.

This afternoon she remarked to me—

"Look at that silly thing, helping the 'nurses.' Why should she? She's got to pay well for being here, and look at the food we've got to eat—not fit for pigs! You didn't eat your dinner. I expect you've been accustomed to something different from this. I have. Those lazy nurses don't get help from me, and I advise you not to begin it. You'll get nothing by helping them," and all the scorn she could convey by a tone of voice lay on that "them."

"I certainly should not help with washing up," I replied. "It is work for which I have always had a special aversion."

Mrs. Edge was neither an educated nor a cultured woman, but she was shrewd and intelligent and always expressed herself very much to the point in the dialect of her native country. Her husband had been very successful in business, and grudged no expense to give her what he was told was the best medical advice available.

In relating how she had become an inmate of the asylum she said resentfully, "'Twas all along of they doctors, curse 'em. My husband wouldn't have sent me to a place like this if they 'adn't made 'im."

I found that this was the opinion of all the patients whose relatives had done their best to prevent their committal. The doctors had insisted, and they alone were to blame for the suffering and misery the patients had endured.

CHAPTER X

IN THE CONVALESCENT WARD (CONTINUED)

One thing struck me forcibly during the first week I spent in the convalescent ward, and that was the different way in which I was treated by the matron, and attendants also. There were no more threats of blows or "pads." I was, however, still made to feel my exceeding insignificance in comparison with the staff, yet I was now a human being, if of a lower order than those in authority over me. But I found the close watch on all my movements, and the loss of all privacy very keenly. In an asylum, however, one learns to be thankful for mercies, so infinitesimally small, that in the outside world they would be invisible.

Snubs were still frequent, and peremptory commands required instant obedience, even when these were most unreasonable, yet the manner in which I was treated was a vast improvement on that I experienced in the observation room, where everyone did their utmost to convince me that in the opinion of the staff I was not a human being at all, but the most contemptible worm, quite beneath the consideration

of such an important body as the powers that ruled me.

During that first afternoon I slept a little, for the cushioned chair was soothing to my aching bones and tender skin.

"You are sleepy," the matron remarked. "Well, you have to make up several weeks' arrears."

But she did not consider it necessary to arrange for me to have a quiet sleep, of which I stood so sorely in need, and I was able only to snatch brief periods of unconsciousness, being frequently awakened by the noise and movement around me.

At four o'clock the gong sounded again, and we filed into the dining-room for tea. There were two big plates of white bread and butter, thick and uninviting, and the butter most sparingly spread. An attendant presided, as the matron took tea with Miss Devise in her tiny sitting-room. The "nurse" was seated before an immense tin tea-pot, which was surrounded by an array of coarse, white tea-cups, of which, like the tumblers at the dinner-table, there was never a sufficiency.

I was surprised to see the blackness of the tea, which was probably the result of its quality, which, like all the food, was of the commonest, it would therefore be highly coloured.

The patients begged to have water added, but their requests were seldom complied with.

An old lady, whom I had seen for the first time that

day, complained very much of the bread and butter. "It is only fit for school-girls with healthy appetites," she declared; "I cannot eat it. I care very little for bread and butter when it is properly cut, but this is disgusting."

"Now, then," said the nurse, "we don't want none o' your grumblin', Miss Hares. Nothing's ever right for you, so of course this nice bread and butter don't please you."

The old lady was deaf, so the attendant had raised her voice. In a lower key she remarked: "She's always grumblin', nothing can please *her*." But I heard the old lady's story later, and she had every reason to grumble, and not at the bread and butter alone.

At seven o'clock we filed in for supper, which consisted of thick bread and butter, the commonest cheese, water and milk, or stimulants for those who took, and paid for, them.

The interval between tea and supper had been spent in the lounge, where an attendant occupied herself with needlework, and with scolding poor Miss Needes who had not ceased to sob and cry and call for her mother and sister since she came from the dining-room. Mrs. Edge had spent the whole interval in crying for her children and bemoaning her sad fate. Miss Blanke and the fat old lady joined us in the drawing-room only after supper, as they sat during the day in the former's private sitting-room, if

so public a strip of passage deserved that name. Nothing whatever had been done by matron or attendants to provide exercise, amusement or occupation for the patients, who depended entirely on themselves or on each other for any change in the dreary monotony of the long, unoccupied, weary day, and I began to feel by the time we were dismissed to our beds at 8-30 that even dish-washing would be a boon and a blessing after a month of this aimless idleness.

On going to my new quarters for the night, I was agreeably surprised to find that the old lady who had kindly paid me a daily visit when I was in the observation room, occupied one of the five beds. The old lady who had protested against the thick bread and butter was my near neighbour, and a very quiet patient, whom I had seen for the first time that day in the lounge, had the bed next the door, while an attendant occupied the other and largest cubicle. This room was considered the best in the house and was divided by means of thin muslin curtains into five cubicles, each of which contained a combined piece of furniture and one chair. There was one small wardrobe, that boasted a long mirror, for the use of the five persons occupying the room. The floor was covered with oil-cloth or linoleum, and the room lighted by two small sash windows on the north, and on the south there was one window and a glass door which led by a wooden ladder to the bank opposite the lounge, and was called the fire-escape.

The mattress in my room I found much more comfortable than the miserable pallet on which I lay during those dreadful days and hideous nights in the observation room, and very thankful I felt for the quasi-privacy of the cubicle. To the unbounded surprise of the other occupants of the room, I was given the charge of all my clothes and personal belongings. To be in the "pads" one week and the convalescent ward the next was surprising, and a subject of conversation among all the patients; but at the end of a week to be given the custody of all my belongings was breaking a record indeed!

But I found the inactivity of the life I now led even worse than its deadly monotony. I, who all my life had been obliged to compress two hours' work into one, whose interests had been so many and varied, whose energies had been taxed to the utmost, and who frequently had not known five minutes' relaxation in a working day of fourteen hours, was now compelled to sit idly for twelve long, weary hours of every day, with only my sad thoughts for occupation. The unaccustomed inaction was positive pain, and produced such despondency that the matron wrote to my sister, asking if she could see me, and give me any assurance as to my future, which she thought weighed heavily on my mind. But as I grew stronger, my natural *gaieté de coeur* returned in some slight degree, and I found interests in those around me, and in preparing the materials for this history. But for

the first fortnight I was in the convalescent ward I was not allowed to handle a needle, a pair of scissors, or even to hold a piece of bread to the fire to toast. I well remember what pleasure I felt when, during that fortnight, I was asked by an attendant to unlock the door leading into the doctor's house! She gave me her key, as her arms were full of clothes, and it was a real joy to me, little as my mind was attuned to pleasure of any kind, to be doing something, if only turning a key in a door, which was more than I had done for nearly two months.

On one of those miserable days I asked the matron if some employment could be found for me. "Could the doctor not give me some secretarial work? I would so gladly do it," I said. The matron looked at me in utter astonishment, and almost dropped the glass she held in her hand. "No, indeed," she replied at last, "I am quite sure he could not; it would be useless to ask him," and so I sat with my hands idly before me.

On the first day I got into the lounge I felt the keenest desire and longing to breathe the fresh, free air of Heaven once again, to smell the earth, and to be under the sky out of a building. But I was told I was not strong enough to walk in the garden, or rather round the path, so I opened one of the conservatory windows, as well as I could, and inhaled the pure air with the keenest relish. I had not felt it on my face since I left my home, now nearly two months since,

except when I was taken on the Parade and on the journey.

On the first Tuesday afternoon I spent in the convalescent ward, the lounge was prepared for the weekly service, held by the Vicar of the parish. In appearance, dress, manners and speech he was utterly unlike any clergyman of the Established Church I had ever seen or known. His aspirates were a wandering quantity, and often surprised us by appearing in unexpected places. Many of the patients came from the other wards, and some of the male patients were brought in by their attendants, and we were in all about thirty souls.

What a travesty the whole thing seemed to me! And how awful was the thought that *I* was a lunatic, joining in a service for lunatics, and listening to the chaplain's amazing address, which, I presumed, was so amazing in order that it might suit the limited capacity of the insane hearers! When the service concluded, the matron, attendants and patients were anxious to know my opinion of it.

"Well," I replied, "I have never assisted at anything of the sort before, therefore cannot form an opinion, but I am at a loss to understand why you choose a dissenting minister to conduct your services when we are nearly all members of the Church of England."

I was assured that the Vicar of the nearest village had conducted the service, but not even when I heard

him preach in the parish church could I reconcile the man's characteristics with those of a clergyman of the Church of England. Frequently his sermons were excellent and some of his addresses good, and I listened with interest to both, but that first address was the most extraordinary production of the kind ever composed, and to me appeared irreverent and childish.

The Vicar remained a few minutes after the service, and the matron introduced him to me. He addressed some trivial remark to me which he doubtless thought suited to the understanding of a person of unsound mind. His chief anxiety at the services seemed to be to get as soon as he could into the fresh air outside, and for that he was scarcely to be blamed, for ♦ the air of the lounge was insufferable.

Miss Blanke, her friend, the fat old lady, and Miss H—— formed the *élite* of this strange assembly, or thought they did, which amounted to the same thing, and each and all were loud in their praises of the Vicar's kindness, and assured me they liked him extremely. These ladies did not sit in the rows of chairs arranged down the centre of the lounge, but were accommodated with easy chairs on either side of the long table, at one end of which the Vicar sat. As soon as I was strong enough I undertook the musical portion of the service if the Welsh lady, who was very musical, was unable to play. The Vicar's wife never visited the patients. What a help to them her presence would have been! I was told that a former

curate—the Vicar at this time was without one—and his wife had done their utmost to cheer and to brighten the sad, weary lives of these worse than prisoners, and both of them were most gratefully remembered by all who had known them.

The second day I was in the lounge, Miss Blanke made me free of her private—but really very public—passage, which was dignified by the name of sitting-room. Its dimensions were nine feet by five, and it had a window out of all proportion to its size. The woodwork was old and admitted icy streams of air, and to add to the discomfort it faced north; moreover, down the huge, old-fashioned chimney, winter blasts howled fiercely, blowing smoke and flame over the occupants of the room. Indeed, when the wind blew from a certain quarter a fire was impossible. It was little wonder then that on bitterly cold days these two old ladies appeared in the lounge at one o'clock almost frozen with cold.

“You will get tired of the sobs and sighs of Mrs. Edge and Miss Needes, so come to my ‘passage.’ I shall be delighted to have you, for your conversation is most interesting, and I should like to enjoy it as far as I can, for you will not be here long,” she remarked as she gave me the invitation.

Through this sitting-room four patients and an attendant had to pass, as they occupied a bedroom reached only through this small passage. The servants also had no other means of reaching this

inner bedroom. Now would any sane person have been compelled to pay four guineas per week for such accommodation?

Nor was Miss Blanke more fortunate in the position of her bedroom, which adjoined the "pads," and as the cell generally had an occupant at night, the amount of sleep she procured was, as a rule, less than that enjoyed by the patients generally; thus she often appeared at the breakfast-table hollow-eyed and tired from a wakeful night.

And what did she gain by complaining to the commissioners, the only authorities the law allowed to assist her? For one thing, all her keys were taken from her and her wardrobe and the treasures of a lifetime were at the mercy of servants and attendants by day and night. She was never studied in any way by doctors, matron or attendants; she was a person of no consequence whatever, and was made to feel this on every possible occasion, and at every opportunity. She often remarked to me that if she expressed a wish to go in a certain direction when patients were taken for a walk, which happened not more often than once or twice in six weeks or two months, the attendants invariably chose the opposite. She was out of favour, and made to feel so every day of her life, and she had no power to improve her accommodation or to ameliorate in the slightest degree her miserable lot.

Miss Blanke had, during twenty-five years, seen so

many patients and was so intelligent that her opinion was as good as a doctor's, and her advice—the doctors gave none—to the new patients invaluable.

"If you want to leave the Cradlearium," she would say, "occupy yourself. Never mind if you only wind and unwind a ball of wool. Do it a hundred times if you can find no other employment, but do something and do it all the time."

Sound sense and advice, and did those in authority over the insane but make it their guiding rule, there would be no need to enlarge present nor to erect new buildings. But sound sense was unknown where I was, as far as dealing with the mentally afflicted went; it may be in other asylums, but of them I cannot speak from personal experience.

So, two days later, finding time hang heavily on my idle hands, and feeling strong enough to mount the stairs alone, I inquired of Miss Devise if she thought I might go to Miss Blanke's room.

"Yes, certainly," she replied, "and I will show you the way," for the bump of locality is totally absent in my anatomy, and I often lost myself in the maze of bedrooms and staircases, which latter appeared to me to crop up in most unexpected places and at the most unlikely corners.

I spent quite a pleasant half-hour in the passage-room, despite the draughts that filled it, looking at Miss Blanke's pictures, which entirely covered the walls. Some of them were remarkable, especially

some cathedral interiors; these, she explained, were painted by a patient at the other asylum, in which she had spent fifteen years. This asylum must have been superior in every way to my present abode, and when referring to it, Miss Blanke would say, "Ah! I have made a change for the worse! But this patient got well, thanks to me. I always said to him, 'Do something,' as I said to you, my dear, and when I found he could paint, I encouraged him to do so, and bought these pictures of him. He recovered, and left the asylum, never to enter one again, I hope."

"Cannot *you* leave?" I asked. "Surely there is nothing mentally the matter with you!"

"A sister placed me here, and a sister's spite keeps me here," she replied. "I have no relative to help me, I do all in my power to get away; how I have tried! But I fear I shall never get away now."

I found that she had made attempts at various times to escape, but these, of course, were futile, and only added to the rigours of her confinement.

Our pleasant *tête-à-tête* was interrupted by the appearance of an attendant, who had missed me from the lounge. "What are *you* doing here?" she asked severely. I replied that I had come on Miss Blanke's invitation, to see her room and her pictures. "I am doing no harm," I added. "Well, you'll just come away at once, and you'll not come here again," said the attendant, whom I very unwillingly followed out of the room. Then, turning to Miss Blanke, she

said, "Don't you have Miss Hamilcar again; you know quite well it is not allowed." So Miss Blanke's kind thought for me was frozen in the bud by the powers that were, and I was robbed of a little change and diversion in the painful monotony of my life. But to her I shall ever feel grateful, for she did what she could to cheer and help a despairing soul, which is more than I can say of the sane around me, and I do not doubt that some day the despised lunatic will be exalted above those who punished and degraded her.

Left without occupation or an interest in life, I became a prey to my sad thoughts. The matron noticed my mental distress, and one afternoon of the first week I was in the lounge, asked me if I cared to write a letter. "I should like to write several," I replied, quite astonished at her question. So far I had received not one word from relative or friend—my sister being careful to explain to every one that I was not in a fit state of mind to read letters, which, like so many of her statements then and afterwards, was utterly untrue. I could have read a letter and have understood its contents, and I could have written one had my shaking hands permitted me to hold a pen the day after I entered the asylum, for, however harsh and cruel the treatment I received there was, I was not drugged, consequently my mind was as clear and I was as mentally sound as ever in my life before.

I wrote to that relentless sister a letter that would have melted a heart of stone, but which was powerless

to pierce through the granite-like coating of jealousy and spite that surrounded that organ of hers where I was concerned, beseeching her to use her utmost endeavour to obtain my release from a life that threatened my reason.

"I am not insane," I wrote; "I never have been so, but if I remain here I shall become so; the life would deprive the sanest person of reason."

I wrote also to my youngest brother, whose debts I had paid in the past, and from whom I had every right to expect help, for I had succoured him and his family many times in hours of need, but he failed me utterly in mine.

My sister replied that she was astonished to receive a letter from me, but she made no mention that this unexpected letter had caused her any pleasure, and I can quite believe that it had not.

I wrote also to two friends in the town where I had lived, and gave, in detail, an account of the starvation and brutality to which I had been so cruelly subjected in the "Home," and of the unnecessary cropping of my hair. I stated where I was, and assured each friend that to place me in an asylum was both an unnecessary and cruel proceeding, that I was as mentally sound as ever in my life, and most ardently desired to regain my liberty.

These letters were, in each instance, taken to my sisters for an explanation, so astonished were the recipients at the contents. My sisters, however, were

equal to the occasion. I was, they said, suffering from delusions, one of which, and that the most firmly rooted unfortunately, was that I had been cruelly treated at the "Home," which they and the doctors could testify from personal observation was utterly untrue. They begged each correspondent not to comment on the delusion in replying to me, as I was still in a critical condition, and any excitement would only retard the recovery they so earnestly desired and prayed for! Yet three weeks later they refused to remove me when the doctor told them they could take the necessary steps to do so! A clear proof, indeed, of their anxiety for my recovery and removal! They at any rate, by every means in their power, did their utmost to increase my malady, and to cause me to lose my reason, by thwarting me in every wish I expressed, but more especially by refusing to move in the matter of my removal, and thus to restore me to my proper place in the world and to give me back the liberty they had so cruelly taken from me.

Certainly a relative who could deliberately keep another in so dreadful a place as a lunatic asylum one hour longer than was absolutely necessary deserves to be committed there, and there detained a year for every unnecessary day of the other's detention. Were this the law my sisters would spend the rest of their lives doing a very far from agreeable "rest-cure," for they kept me thirteen weeks in the asylum after the doctor told me I could be discharged.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE CONVALESCENT WARD (CONTINUED)

My sisters represented to relatives and friends that I was not in a fit state of mind to see any one or to be seen, nor to receive or write letters, and when I wrote to the relative in whose house I was taken ill, in his reply he remarked, "We are astonished to receive such a well-expressed letter, as from what your sisters have told us we thought you were quite unable to write at all; yet, judging from your letter, your mind must be quite clear."

But my sisters judged quite differently, and in a letter I received some two months later the elder of the two remarked, "We require no further evidence than your letters to prove that you are not in a fit state of mind to leave the asylum. If shown to any specialist this view—the only one possible—would be taken, and we cannot therefore undertake any responsibility with regard to your removal."

From my youngest brother I received during my detention one more epistle in reply to my earnest entreaty that he would take upon himself the responsibility of my removal, since my sisters' delay proved

their unwillingness to effect my enlargement. It was similar in terms to the first, nor did he for the next eighteen months reply to either of the ten letters I wrote him, presumably because I had asked for the return of a small loan I had made him some two years before my illness, and which he had at the time of borrowing promised to pay in a month.

I do not mention these family matters because I wish to revenge myself on my relatives, but to point out how easily the mentally afflicted can be imposed upon, and what opportunities a mental illness offers unscrupulous relatives to defraud and to keep in asylums those against whom they have a spite. Every circumstance, the law, the doctors, public opinion all favour the relatives, whilst their victim is absolutely without help, without a friend, or a court of appeal. Mine is not a solitary case. In the asylum I heard of more than one patient whose relatives had behaved with scarcely less callousness than my own. Here, then, is need for reform indeed. If the law places a mental patient in an asylum, it should defend him from his relatives, protect and look after him, his health, and his interests, in his living grave; instead of which it leaves him as severely alone as if he were indeed dead and his body resting in some peaceful God's Acre.

My sleep the first night in the cubicle room was very broken. I was in mortal fear of being dragged from my bed by the attendant, who very noisily entered the

room every two hours, bearing a lantern in her hand. A gas-jet flared at the bottom of my bed, the light of which fell directly on my face; but all was quiet save for the entrance of the attendant, who frequently awakened the nurse sleeping in the room, and talked to her for perhaps a quarter of an hour; a proceeding not calculated to induce the occupants of the room to slumber profoundly. My surroundings were so infinitely superior in every respect to the hideous observation room that I feared every day I should be told to vacate this favoured spot, which was the quietest in the house, when I saw how patients and nurses "pitched their moving tents" from day to day. To my great relief and astonishment the days passed by and I received no marching orders, but the dread was ever in my mind that I should have to share a room with noisier patients, of whom although I sympathised deeply with their wretched lot, I had no desire to see more than I could help. During the first weeks of my detention I shrank instinctively from the bad cases, but this feeling I subdued, and I would gladly have helped them in any way in my power had I been permitted to do so.

Three days after I entered the asylum I was assisted up a narrow staircase and placed on a weighing-machine.

"What is my weight?" I enquired of the matron.

"Six stone three pounds barely," she replied, "and your height is five feet four inches."

"Then I lost nearly thirty pounds in the "Home" in five weeks," I exclaimed, "for I weighed over eight stone when I entered it."

Three weeks later I was weighed again. I then had gained eleven pounds, notwithstanding that the food was the coarsest and the most unsuited to me that I had ever eaten, and that I had suffered mentally more than ever in my life before, a form of suffering which usually decreases one's weight. Doubtless the extremely sedentary life led by the inmates of this "Temple of Health" conduced to the making of flesh.

But be that as it may, the fact remains that whereas I lost nearly thirty pounds in five weeks at the "Home" where my sisters never tired of assuring me I had the best food and an abundance of it; in the asylum, where the food was the worst, and where it was not too abundant, I gained eleven pounds in the first three weeks!

About three weeks after my committal, the matron remarked to me one afternoon, "I think some one is coming to see you."

"Who is coming?" I very naturally asked, for I expected no one.

"That I cannot tell you," she replied, "but if you care to change your dress, you can do so."

"But I should like to know who I am to see."

"Wait and you will find out," and that was all the information I could gain.

So I waited. About three o'clock an attendant

informed me there were visitors in the drawing-room to see me.

I found two elderly country gentlemen, very bucolic in appearance and sporting in dress, who rose as I entered and shook hands with me. One of them, drawing forward a chair, begged me to be seated. A little distance from them stood the assistant doctor, who remained throughout the interview.

"How are you?" said the elder of the two.

"I am fairly well," I replied, "thank you."

"Can you account for your recent illness?"

"Partly," I replied. "I overworked mentally and physically, and as I have never been strong, I collapsed; but I should never have been sent here had I been properly nursed in my own house."

"You entered a 'Home.' Were you not properly treated there?" inquired the other gentleman.

"I was starved and subjected to every kind of ill-usage," I answered. "I arrived here a mass of bruises. The woman at the 'Home' said these were self-inflicted, but that is quite untrue. I was drugged abominably, and as I have never taken alcohol nor drugs in my life, nor stimulants—not even tea or coffee for years—these drugs, which I strongly objected to take, took a powerful effect on me, and made me delirious. The woman annoyed me in every possible way, and as a proof of her cruelty, as you see, she chopped off my hair."

"She had no right to do that," said one of the

gentlemen, "and if you consider you have been ill-treated, you can complain to the commissioners."

"If I can punish the woman, I will certainly do so," I replied, "but I cannot do that whilst I am here. I am most anxious to get away. I have nothing whatever the matter with me to detain me here, nor can I afford to pay the fees, although I have no idea, and no one will tell me what is being paid for me here. I am quite sure the sum will be far beyond my means; it gives me the greatest anxiety to feel that I am incurring an expense I cannot afford."

"But you look very ill," said the gentleman who had spoken chiefly. "Do I understand that you would take up any work if you left here?"

"I shall be compelled to do so to live," I replied.

"You certainly are not physically fit to undertake any kind of work. If you attempt it, you will only break down again. May I feel your pulse?" He then resumed, "Do you not think you will be wise to remain here until you have quite recovered?" Then, turning to the assistant doctor, he said, "This lady has rapidly recovered her health since she entered this house, has she not?"

"She was practically dying when she came here," was the reply; "she has recovered as you see, and has gained eleven pounds in the three weeks. Not so bad, is it?"

"She requires several eleven pounds more to make her up to the weight she ought to be, considering her

height." Then turning to me, "I think," he said, "you will be wise to remain here, where you have done so well, until you have quite recovered."

"Yes," remarked the other, "you certainly require further rest; you still look very far from robust, or well."

"I have never in my life looked robust," I replied, "and never shall, and as for rest, I assure you I have had more than enough of that. I am longing for some kind of employment. I never have been idle, and to have nothing to do is to me positive pain. Besides, I must live, therefore I must get away from this place and obtain work of some sort."

"But you can sew, and employ yourself in that way," remarked the other gentleman, "and you are happy here, I presume."

"I have never been accustomed to pass the whole of a day in sewing, nor can I earn money in that way," I said. "I have worked with my brain and my hands, actively, and miss my work. And as to being happy here, how can I be? But I suppose I am no worse off than I should be in any other place of the kind. These, however, are not the points. I do not require treatment for mental disease, and I cannot afford to be here, therefore I ought to be allowed to leave."

"Take my advice," replied the other, rising, "and wait until you have got really strong. You are not

fit to undertake any work yet. Good afternoon." With that both shook hands with me and departed.

Mrs. Edge, who took the greatest interest in me and my efforts to leave the asylum, remarked when I returned to the lounge: "That's a doctor from Cottenham, and the other is a magistrate."

"Why have they come to see me?" I asked.

"Oh! They saw me too," she replied, "but they did not tell you you might go, did they?"

Mrs. Edge was a confirmed pessimist, and took the least cheerful view of every subject. She threw cold water on my every effort to obtain my release.

"Better bide quiet, as I do," she said. "I don't write no letters, not to my husband, nor to my children," at the mention of whom her tears began to flow, and continued flowing for the rest of the day.

Inquiries of matron and attendants failed completely to elicit who my visitors had been, or the reason of their visit. Three days after I was placed in the convalescent ward and I was told I might go into the garden there to exercise myself round the plot of grass. But when I got out I was too weak to walk. As usual my limbs were chilled and numbed with cold, and I had not the strength to take sufficient exercise to send the stagnant blood flowing in my veins. So I seated myself on a stone and held my face to the warmth of the sun. The air on those northern heights was keen and sharp as a two-edged sword, for the ground was hard with frost. However monotonous the walk round the plot of grass might be, and

undoubtedly was, in an asylum one gets to be thankful for mercies, so I enjoyed the comparative freedom of being under the vault of Heaven, where locks and bolts are unknown, and where the air, though keen, was pure. I persisted later, much to the chagrin of the attendants, in calling the exercise we obtained in marching round and round the grass plot "doing our term," and by degrees this term became applied by all to the compulsory exercise thus taken.

I was placed in the convalescent ward on a Monday, and on the Thursday following Miss Blanke said to me when she met me in the lounge before dinner :

"We shall have a dance to-morrow evening, after supper. Do come to it, and try to enjoy yourself a little, if you can. There is little enough enjoyment for us in a place like this, but, believe me, you will be wise to take the crumbs that fall in your way. We shall, at least, get a cup of almost respectable coffee, and some biscuits—cheap, of course—at ten o'clock, but even these are a welcome change, if not a treat, when one gets no variety in one's menu year in year out. You must sit with us—the *élite*, you know—in the alcove, and watch us, if you are not strong enough to dance yourself. Now, don't go off to bed, especially as this is your first dance in an asylum."

"We don't dress here," continued Miss Blanke; "the dances are really for the attendants, not for the patients, and only a few of these attend them, but I always am present; I am so glad of the exercise, and,

besides, I love dancing. I was considered a very good dancer when I was young," and in that I quite agreed with her, as I witnessed her performance the next evening.

The usual supper of bread and butter, with the flavouring of strong cheese, milk and water was hurriedly dispatched, and then tables and chairs were packed at one end of the lounge, the pianola fixed to the piano, and played by Miss Devise. Two lady patients came from the other ward, one of whom I had seen dressed and undressed when I was in the observation room. She interested me then, for she was young, and must have been very handsome before her illness. Now she was almost a skeleton. Her figure was tall and graceful, and in colouring she was dark as an eastern houri. Her large, full, dark eyes beamed like stars from under ebon brows and long, thick lashes. She had masses of curly, jet-black hair that must once have been beautiful, but from long neglect were now rusty and dull. Her voice, which was particularly soft and sweet, and her cultured accents had fallen like music on my ears, in contrast with the harsh, uncultured tones and coarse, rough speech of the attendants during the first week of my sojourn in the "Temple of Health." I was told that she possessed a voice of rare beauty, and that when first she came was in the observation ward, where she sang a great deal, but that, like so many other patients, she became much worse after her committal, and was now with the

worst cases, and could never be induced to utter a note. "Why," I asked myself, "had this girl got so much worse? Ought she not to have recovered?" Every day patients, now chronics, were pointed out to me, who, I was told, when they first entered the asylum were in the convalescent ward. Could they not have been cured there, with rational treatment? The more I saw of the "treatment," the more I felt convinced that had these poor creatures been given a fair chance, they would be filling their old places in the world, instead of languishing in imbecility in an asylum.

This dance was attended by ladies only, neither of the doctors being present, and the gentlemen, I presume, not being allowed to come over from their quarters. All the nurses who could manage to leave their charges tripped it vigorously in their heavy boots, which made a dreadful noise.

With the first tune the patient, who talked incessantly, was ordered by the attendants to dance by herself, and she accordingly walked heavily and cumbrously round the lounge, drawing one foot after the other, with a sliding step, that was the feeblest possible attempt at something resembling a polka, her fat, podgy, expressionless face assuming almost an intelligent look of pleasure. Miss Blanke meanwhile executed a brilliant, if old-fashioned, *pas seul* in the middle of the room; after which waltzes, polkas and lancers were vigorously, if very incorrectly danced by the staff and a few of the patients.

I had been told that although the doctors invariably absented themselves, the Superintendent's wife usually graced the assembly with her presence, and that she was expected that evening.

I had not yet seen her, and I, in my ignorance, hoped that she might be able, if I asked her, to find me some kind of employment in this dreadful place more suitable and agreeable to me than sitting all day long with needle and thimble which was the only resource the asylum offered. That even I could not avail myself of, for I was not allowed to handle an implement of any kind, because, I presume, my sister had represented me as suicidal. If I could only find some kind of intellectual work, that would fill the weary hours! Those who murmur because they have work to do, be it even the humblest employment, should be placed in an asylum with absolutely nothing to do, without interests, aims or hobbies for a month. They would return to even the most distasteful work with a keen relish. Better far too much work than none, and I have experienced both extremes.

So I awaited with some interest the appearance of the doctor's wife, and my first glance at her face disappointed me. She appeared to be unsympathetic, and to have a forbidding cast of countenance. Her voice was far from pleasant, and her diction and accent scarcely refined. She was not in her first youth, but had an elegant figure, and joined very heartily in the dancing. At once I felt I should find

no help from that quarter, but I am not easily daunted, and I resolved not to lose the opportunity. I was presented by the matron, and the doctor's wife addressed a few casual words to me relative to my health, suited doubtless, she presumed, to my limited intelligence.

She talked with great volubility to the matron and to some of the patients, and her excitability struck me as much greater than that of the latter. I had always heard that insane people were exceedingly excited, but certainly these with whom I found myself, for the first time in my life, were calm and grave, and particularly quiet in manner and speech; and had I been at the dance as a spectator I should certainly, judging from appearances, have said that the Superintendent's wife was a patient and Miss Blanke, for instance, a visitor!

Miss Blanke insisted on my being her partner for one round dance, although I was too weak to walk round the lounge more often than once a day; but, supported by her strong arm, I must confess that a slight feeling of exhilaration, to which I had long been a stranger, gave me a sensation of pleasure.

As such a feeling could only promote the well-being of a patient, and aid in his or her recovery, ought not even the worst cases to have a chance of experiencing it? Yet in this asylum little enough was done for the employment, entertainment or amusement of the convalescents, but absolutely nothing was even

attempted for the chronics and worst cases. That these would have benefited by occupation and by healthy amusement and exercise I am firmly convinced, but they had no power to provide either for themselves, and those who had the power did not care sufficiently for the well-being of those committed to their charge to exercise it.

During an interval between the dances, I found the Superintendent's wife sitting next me. She addressed some trivial remark to me, and I then summoned up the courage to ask if I could help her in any way. I explained that after my well-filled hours I found my present aimless idle life absolutely intolerable; that I should be glad of employment, either in writing letters, keeping accounts, arranging flowers, etc., if she could find it for me. But my hopes sank again to zero when she gave me a very decided "No"—although she spoke not unkindly.

"Such a thing would be impossible," she continued. "Indeed, work at present would be a worry to you; you need rest. Take it whilst you can."

There was not another dance until Easter Monday evening, for the staff was very busy with the new arrivals. On one or two Friday evenings some of the attendants cleared the lounge, and took the polish off the floor for an hour or so, but no light refreshment graced these occasions, nor did the Superintendent's wife lend the light of her countenance, but on Easter Monday she arrived, accompanied by her two small

dogs, that she fondled and caressed every moment, even dancing with them in her arms.

The refreshments were on a more liberal scale on this occasion, and consisted of different kinds of buns and small cakes in addition to the usual biscuits. As the two former had been purchased on the previous Thursday, their staleness would doubtless have disgusted a sane assembly accustomed to luxuries every day. In the asylum, however, the plates were rapidly emptied, for even dry buns and stale cakes are a welcome change to the eternal bread and butter, and monotonous unappetizing viands that appeared at dinner.

On Easter Monday dancing was prolonged until eleven p.m. Only ladies were present, and only two or three patients took part in the dances, although one or two of the chronics were brought from the ward to watch the festivities.

I felt too wretched to feel any interest in feasts or festivals. My whole thoughts were occupied with my release, which my sisters were delaying as long as they possibly could, and I was eagerly watching the arrival of the two posts daily, only to feel a bitter disappointment when nothing arrived for me. I had so hoped to be at liberty before Easter, and there was apparently no more chance of my regaining my freedom at that time than at the first dance, when I had been but a fortnight in "durance vile." There was, therefore, little, if any, Easter joy for me that year,

and with a heavy heart I looked from the drawing-room window on the uncouth gyrations of the greater number of the attendants, and wondered at the strong nerves of the dogs, which evidently were not upset by the violent swinging to which they were subjected in their mistress's arms, but bore the unaccustomed movement—to which perhaps they were no strangers, since they made no audible protest—with becoming gravity and decorum. I was glad to leave the noise of the heavy boots of the attendants on the wooden floor, the crash of the pianola—so mechanical and meaningless—and the mockery of festivity, so little in unison with my weary, heavy heart, and to retire to the cubicle at an early hour, from whence I could still hear the sounds of the incongruous revelry.

One bitterly cold morning about ten days after I was placed in the convalescent ward I was told to dress for a drive, and to be ready by 10-30 a.m. I objected on account of not feeling well enough to face the biting blast in an open carriage. I was, however, peremptorily bidden to cease grumbling, and to do as I was told. So, with many a shiver as I looked out at the snow-laden clouds and listened to the blasts of the biting north-easter as its furious gusts shook my window, I prepared for the drive, which I should not have dreamed of taking had I been my own mistress; for I well knew that in my state of health I could not with impunity expose myself in an open carriage for two hours in such a frigid atmosphere. As I have

said before, the system of sick-nursing in an asylum is diametrically opposed to that known and practised outside; so to the doctors and attendants there was nothing unsuitable or unusual in sending me, weak and exhausted as I then was, to brave the icy elements and to freeze with cold.

We were out two hours, and the drive was taken under leaden skies over the bleakest, most desolate region I have ever seen. The icy wind blew through my clothing and I felt its contact with my skin. How I bore those two hours I do not know. A heavy snow-storm at last compelled us to return, and I alighted so stiffened and benumbed with cold I could with difficulty move my limbs sufficiently to enter the house, and for days I could not get warm. I am convinced that that drive, in my emaciated, bloodless condition, helped to develop the disease I contracted from exposure to the cold of the hideous cell; yet it was compulsory, I was compelled to take it, knowing that I was doing a mad thing in my state of health.

On my return a patient said, "You don't look as though you had enjoyed your outing; your face is as blue as your hands, and you can't walk. I suppose you know that you'll have to pay five shillings for your treat."

"Indeed, I know nothing of the charges here," I replied. "I have asked my sisters again and again, but they refuse to tell me. I certainly cannot afford to take five shilling drives, so I shall stoutly refuse

another. This has been a penance, I assure you, and to pay dearly for it is indeed adding insult to injury."

Accordingly, when a week or two later, I was again told to prepare for a drive, I sought the matron.

"I understand we are charged for drives here," I said. "Now, I cannot afford the additional expense for one thing, and, for another, it is far too cold to do me any good; it will, in fact, do me a great deal of harm to go out on such a day as this in an open carriage." The matron was busily employed cleaning out her canary cage, she therefore had no "time" to argue with me, or to listen to reason from so insignificant an individual as a patient.

She turned angrily round, and exclaimed, "You have come to bother me now when I'm so busy I don't know 'ow to turn round! I've got no time to arrange a drive for anybody else, so you'll have to go, and don't let me hear any more grumbling, or 'twill be the worse for you!"

"You must understand that I cannot afford to pay," I replied.

"I know nothing about it; I only know you'll go, so go away, and don't bother me any more."

I went, but resolved that I would not pay for those drives, and, as my bill was not sent in until after I left, I refused that item, as well as the repairs, but I believe my sisters had to pay both.

My first walk was to the village church some two miles distant. I had then been a month at the asylum.

As the country roads were very muddy and the distance considerable attendance at the church was, during the winter, very irregular. Sometimes the matron took three or four patients to a mission service in a "tin tabernacle" at a hamlet some half a mile from the asylum, and I always had the option of going. Once or twice in perhaps three months two or three patients would accompany an attendant to the nearest village to make purchases, and a walk would be taken over the bare, desolate hills once in five or six weeks. But this exercise was enjoyed rarely by any other than the convalescent patients; the others had no exercise beyond an occasional carriage drive, and what their garden afforded, which needless to remark was quite insufficient, and they undoubtedly suffered physically as I did; their mental improvement was delayed, if not rendered impossible, by the monotony and inactivity of their lives.

My mental distress at the loss of my home, my work, and indeed everything I valued, did not subside as I gained in physical health; I think I realized all the more keenly day by day what coming to the asylum meant to me. The matron must, in a letter to my sisters, have remarked on this, for when I had been about a month in the "Temple" I was told that my sister was coming to see me on a certain day. It snowed, however, heavily and was intensely cold, so the visit was postponed. But the next week my youngest sister appeared.

Her visit was of but short duration.

"The matron"—who was present—"tells me," she remarked, "that you worry about your future. That is very wrong, and prevents your recovery."

"My recovery will be entirely prevented unless I leave this place, and at once," I replied. "Had I but been properly nursed by that awful woman, I should never have come here. There is nothing mentally wrong with me, and that I can prove; and as you know that I cannot afford to be here, if it rests with you to remove me, you ought to do so at once. *Does my removal rest with you or with the doctor?* I cannot find this out here, but you must know. Had I, when you were so very ill years ago, allowed you to be treated as you allowed that woman to treat me, you would have been as bad as I was, and probably *you* would have been taken to an asylum."

My sister made no attempt to reply to any of my questions, as I paused after each, but she turned to the matron and said: "Miss Hamilcar still has the delusion that she was ill-treated in the "Home," I see."

"Miss Hamilcar has insisted on the ill-treatment ever since she came here," replied the matron.

"It is no delusion, and that you know quite well, as the state of my body proved. All those bruises——"

"Were self-inflicted, as I can testify," interrupted my sister. "But I must be going, or I shall lose my

train. I think," she said, turning to the matron, "that we shall be able to arrange for Miss Hamilcar to go abroad for a time, when she leaves you—which, I can see, must not be yet—she is fond of continental life, and then when the gossip about her illness has died out she can return, and perhaps live with us."

"You know quite well," I replied, "that I have not the means to go abroad, nor to remain here. Don't go yet, there are so many business matters on which I must talk to you. What has become of all my goods and my furniture?"

"Some we have removed to our house; the rest we shall sell," was the reply, for my sisters had taken possession of all my worldly goods, just exactly as though they belonged to them. "We have found a tenant for the house"—which I had on a long lease—"and he will take possession early in June."

"But you surely cannot sell my furniture without my consent," I exclaimed. "Nothing must be sold until I have returned to look over my books, etc. I shall not give my consent, I assure you, unless I can return and arrange the sale myself, if I must have one. I am perfectly able to do so, mentally and physically."

"We shall see about that," replied my sister. "You are not well enough to leave yet. But she has very much improved here," she remarked to the matron.

"Miss Hamilcar has recovered very rapidly," replied the woman.

"One generally recovers rapidly when there has been nothing the matter," I replied. "I have not suffered mentally here. Of course, I admit I had simple mental depression when I entered that awful 'Home,' but that had quite gone before I came here. And now," I said to my sister, "will you tell me what I have to pay here. I have asked you again and again in my letters, but you have **never** replied to my repeated questions?"

"I cannot," she replied, "for I do not know myself; but I am sure of this, the doctor will not overcharge you. He has promised to make a considerable reduction in his fees, as he knows you are not rich."

She then left, having stayed perhaps twenty minutes, and her visit gave me as little satisfaction as did her letters, and but little hope that I should soon obtain my release, at least if the latter depended on the efforts she and my other sister might make.

CHAPTER XII

THE CONVALESCENT WARD (CONTINUED)

Day by day I recovered strength and was, about three weeks after my committal, allowed to use a needle, and I very gladly employed myself in mending the slashes and cuts made in my night-dresses by the woman in the "Home."

I began to interest myself in the patients, more especially in Miss Needes, who grew worse mentally and physically every day, which did not surprise me. It was very pitiful to see her seated by Miss Devise's side, answering the questions from an ancient edition of a "Child's Guide to Knowledge," which, doubtless being considered suitable to the capacities of the patients, found a place on the book-shelves. Her pleasure when she answered a question correctly, was so real.

"I am really getting well; I know the answers better, don't I?" she would question eagerly. "O! shall I go home soon to mother and Isabel?" Then she would begin to sob and to cry.

I noticed that if her attention was occupied she ceased her sobbing, and would talk almost coherently.

One day, before I was permitted to use a needle, I said to the "nurse," as she was called away from the lounge, "Leave Miss Needes to me; I will amuse her until you return," for she never worried nor annoyed me as she did the other patients.

So I took the "Child's Guide," and delighted her by asking her questions, and in the course of the afternoon I was allowed to devote to her, I found that she recited beautifully. She began several of Longfellow's poems, but lines here and there escaped her memory, and finding that the poetry soothed her, and occupied her completely, so that she forgot to sob and cry, I hunted over the book-shelves in the drawing-room, hoping to find a copy of the poet's works there, but in vain.

The matron passed through the lounge on this occasion, and seeing me engaged in trying to help the poor girl, uttered some words of thanks. I replied that it was always a pleasure to me to help Miss Needes, and I continued that I had observed that she ceased crying and became quiet and reasonable when with anyone who took her out of herself and found some occupation for her mind, "and that is a thing that has caused me the greatest surprise since I have been here," I continued, "you do nothing for the patients' minds, yet their minds are diseased, and they come here to be healed."

"But who would have the time?" inquired the matron. "We have more than we can do to look after

the patients' bodies!" Surely such a reply requires no comment!

I was also deeply interested in Mrs. Edge, separated so tragically from her home and family. I tried to cheer her, and to persuade her to write to her husband, but in the latter I could not succeed, and when I tried to make her look more brightly on her future she would say, "If there had been any one like you here when I first came, I should never have got like this; but I was so knocked about by the nurses, and treated worse than any criminal, I can never do again as I used to, and I can never go back to my home again." But she improved, in spite of her indifference as to her recovery. I usually saw the doctors on their hurried visit to the convalescent ward, and when I could get a chance of a word or two with the Superintendent, drew his attention to the state of my hands and feet. But further than remarking that my hands seemed unusually cold, he took no notice of my complaints, nor did the assistant doctor.

As I had never suffered from anything before, my health caused me great anxiety. Finding that the doctors were indifferent, I drew the attention of the matron and attendants to the state of my hands and feet, but they, like the doctors, were too accustomed to such and kindred symptoms in other patients to pay any heed to mine. I showed my swollen hands to the matron on my return from one of our rare walks, when I could with difficulty close them.

"You have gout, I should say," she remarked, as if it was quite the usual thing to have this form of disease.

"But ought I not to be treated for it, if that is so?" I questioned.

"O! what you have is nothing very serious," she replied.

"If not serious, it is very uncomfortable and painful," I answered, "and as all my life I have taken illnesses from their commencement, and had medical advice, I should like to do so now, for my health is of importance to me, and I must take care of it."

However, nothing was done for me, and I then applied to the attendant—the successor of the peremptory "nurse"—who, much to our regret, for she was more humane than many of the others, and had acquired her manner in pauper asylums, had left some weeks before.

"You have gout," said the new attendant, who also had spent many years in a county asylum. She had however, unlike the majority of the staff, had some hospital training.

"Then, I ought to be medically treated and dieted," I replied.

"Dieted!" she echoed. "When you come to these places you can't expect to be dieted. You must take your chance with the rest."

And take my chance I did, although I paid dearly enough for attendance I did not get. A year after I

left the asylum I was in a wretched state of health. Thus I was prevented from doing anything towards my maintenance for nearly two years. Naturally, as soon as I was free I obtained the advice I ought to have been given months before.

A sane person, who has never been confined behind the bolts and bars of an asylum cannot possibly conceive what my feelings were when I knew that medical advice was imperative, yet I could not obtain it; when I was compelled to eat food, which I knew increased the disease I had contracted because I was not permitted to take ordinary care of my health. The food I required was as unattainable, situated as I was, as though I had been located in the heart of the Sahara. Surrounded by so-called nurses, I could not command the ministrations a workhouse infirmary would afford, although I knew I should have to pay the fees of a first-class nursing home.

I saw a doctor, or was supposed to see one, every day, yet I suffered intensely from want of medical advice. And I knew that I was not the only sufferer in that "Temple of Health" whose complaints fell on unheeding ears. This strengthened my resolve to give to the world a true and "authentick" account of my experiences of asylum life and treatment, in the hope that it might be read by those who could do what I could not, viz., bring about an urgently-needed reform in the treatment of the insane, the most hapless and helpless of God's created creatures.

And thereto I took notes, I questioned patients and nurses, I noted every incident that came in my way, and every time I saw the doctor—who was frequently absent for a week or week-ends—I assured him that I was not suffering in any way mentally—which was perfectly true—that my health was being ruined by the inactive life I was compelled to lead, that I required medical attention, and that last, but not least, I could not afford to pay his fees, therefore, if for no other reason than this, I must leave his asylum; would he arrange for me to do so? Whether he attributed this to the vapourings of a diseased mind, or whether he did not listen, I do not know, but time went on and I still remained a prisoner.

Several new patients arrived about three weeks after I did. The matron told me these came more frequently in spring than in winter, and the staff of attendants, too few for the number of patients, were unusually busy, and to that fact I attribute my being able to keep my reason. The mental distress I silently suffered in my enfeebled physical condition, when my nerves were shattered by the wholesale drugging to which I had been so unmercifully subjected, the thought of my financial ruin, and of my wrecked health and life, the uncertainty of my recovering my liberty, of how and where I should spend the remainder of my life, were enough to turn the brain of the strongest man. Yet every day, as I grew stronger, my mental powers strengthened also, and as I was as rational as

the attendants themselves and *gave them no trouble*, but helped them in their duties, I had the inexpressible relief of less surveillance every day.

I am convinced that had I been subjected to the same incessant supervision daily and nightly as that to which poor Miss Needes was subjected, I should have become as unnerved as she, and undoubtedly in time have developed mania. The attendants, fortunately for me, had their hands full with the fresh cases and I had a chance to keep my reason.

The other patients would often remark on the difference between them and myself. "Miss Hamilcar has a strong, sound brain, she can write and read and do what we can't. There's nothing the matter with her, as there is with us." Sometimes, however, Mrs. Edge's pessimism would lead her to differ. For instance, if I dropped a reel of cotton or thimble, she would say, "There now, before you came here you would not have done that, there's something unnatural about you and about all of us here."

One of the patients in the convalescent ward had swollen, chapped, and dreadfully mis-shapen hands. The chaps bled night and day, from the intense cold, and the hard water in which she had to wash them, and to which she was not accustomed. I had frequently applied my Vinolia ointment and bound up the bleeding fingers; I had also remarked to the matron on the discomfort and pain the poor thing must suffer, and asked if nothing could be done for

her. The matron promised to give her something, but, as usual, forgot to do so. The assistant doctor one morning, noticing the bleeding fingers, remarked with a sneer as he passed this lady, "Can't you knit some mittens?"

"And can't you prevent her from having chapped hands?" I muttered. "Or give her something to cure them!"

When the matron appeared I showed her Miss Clark's hands. "She wants some kind of healing ointment," I said. "Mittens, which is all the doctor can prescribe, won't heal chaps; if you will give me something, I will apply it and bind the fingers up, and try to get them better." The ointment was given, and in a few days the hands improved; but had I not insisted nothing would have been done, for the patient was of such a meek disposition she would never have asked for herself, fearing to give "trouble."

I wrote constantly to my sisters, and related how I suffered for want of medical attention, but their letters were infrequent and invariably the same.

"You are not well enough to leave yet," they wrote. "You still have delusions, and think you were cruelly treated in the 'Home.'" You also have delusions with regard to your health; your suffering is mainly imaginary. We are convinced that if it were not so, you would receive the attention you think you need. As to doing anything in the matter of getting you

away, we consider that you require at least six months' treatment to effect a cure, and can only advise you to be patient, and remain that time. We also agree with the doctor, that for you to return to your house for the sale would be most unwise. You must leave everything to us, and we shall arrange."

I knew my sisters' reasons for refusing to assist in removing me were primarily that if I left in three or four weeks people would naturally ask if it had been absolutely necessary that I should be placed in an asylum at all. As they had represented the form of insanity from which I suffered as the most incurable, and my recovery utterly hopeless, my rapid cure would be difficult to explain satisfactorily to their credit; so they resolved on a six months' detention, and I am convinced that had the matter been left entirely to them at the end of that time I should have been told that another six months was absolutely necessary to my complete cure, and that these six months would have been extended to the term of my natural life.

In the fifth week of my detention, several weeks before the sale, the Superintendent said to me as he made his usual morning visit to the lounge, "You are much better, you may now have your discharge if your sisters will take the usual steps to remove you."

My delight was unbounded; yet the knowledge that I was dreadfully disfigured spoiled the intense pleasure the doctor's communication caused me.

I inquired eagerly what formalities would have to be gone through before I could leave, and was told that I could do nothing whatever in the matter. I begged to know the date of my removal, and was told that also depended on my sisters and the doctor.

I was powerless in any way to effect my release. I accordingly wrote, and then began a long and weary waiting. I wrote again and again, but still no reply came to my letters. Then I wrote to my youngest brother telling him that the doctor had said I might leave if my friends would take the usual steps to effect my enlargement, and begging him, as I could get no reply from my sisters, to himself undertake to set me free; but to this also no reply came. Tutored by my sisters, my brother left my letter unanswered.

A fortnight passed. Every day I expected to leave on the morrow, and the morrow found me still in "durance vile." I now scarcely ever saw the Superintendent, who, I believe, studiously avoided me, and in reply to any inquiries made of the assistant doctor the reply invariably was, "I am not official, I can tell you nothing."

At last a letter came from my sister, but, as usual, unsatisfactory and disappointing.

"We cannot remove you yet," she wrote, "these affairs take a long time; legal machinery moves slowly. You must wait patiently, it will be unwise to run risks and have a return of your illness. We have both been ill and unable to attend to the business

matters in connexion with your leaving; we shall see what steps have to be taken, but we warn you this sort of thing cannot be done in a day or two, it will take time."

Now, it is possible I may have left a day or two after the doctors gave me my discharge had my furniture been sold, but until that was out of the house, and it would be impossible for me to see how the latter had been stripped, I was detained, although the doctor would have discharged me the day he spoke to me; as I have said, any relatives anxious for my removal would and could have taken me away at the end of the first fortnight.

The days, long and weary, grew into weeks, the weeks into months, and still I languished in my living grave. Was such treatment calculated to complete my cure? My sisters knew quite well that in prolonging my torture to the utmost they were doing all in their power to cause me to lose my reason; and certainly if my brain had been as weak as in every letter they assured me it was, the worry and anxiety they caused me in the matter of my leaving the asylum alone would have produced insanity and made of me what they hoped I should become—a hopeless chronic. But I had never been insane, and there was no fear of my now becoming so.

As the spring advanced the patients began to talk of the visit of the commissioners, which usually took place at this time of the year, and I questioned

everybody as to their powers of procedure. Could they discharge me? I was answered in the negative; only the doctor could do that. But I determined that I would get speech with these gentlemen. I knew that a private interview would be useless. Doctors, matron, or nurses were always within hearing, where all doors were kept open, even if the interview were supposed to be private; but I would do my best to be heard, and I would ask for my release.

The "Temple" underwent a thorough purification in anticipation of the visit, which, from the anxiety of the matron and attendants to have everything in order, was evidently regarded by them as a matter of very considerable importance. The patients regarded it, however, with indifference; nothing appeared to them important. Their sombre, dreary days brought no event that concerned them nearly, they had left events outside the walls of their graves, nothing occurred now to quicken the slow beat of their languid pulses, and they looked on at the sweeping, cleaning and garnishing with unconcern.

But I looked forward with eagerness to a conversation with these arbiters of my fate, as I meant they should be. This visit is supposed to be a surprise, but it is nothing of the sort. The evening before I was seated in the garden with Miss Devise when the Superintendent came up to her, and said—she was a voluntary patient—"I suppose you do not wish to see the commissioners. I have just heard at the club that

they will be here to-morrow morning at eleven, and if you like, you can go for a walk at that time," which she did, and one of the gentlemen was sent out at the same hour with an attendant.

The morning for which the staff had made such extensive preparations was, for that cold season, bright and spring-like, and the peremptory attendant ordered those patients who were in the convalescent ward even more peremptorily than usual into the garden much earlier than usual. We obeyed, but in a quarter of an hour were again peremptorily ordered to return to the lounge. There we found Miss Hares, who did not as a rule appear until after eleven, and the fat old lady, who had been induced to hasten her toilette, and was being made happy with one of the hard cakes left over from Sunday. The lounge looked its best, as the two elderly gentlemen entered it, and there were about eighteen patients in it. Curiously enough, as the former entered, the matron asked me if I would fetch her something she had left in another part of the house, and I was away quite five minutes, for I could not find the article which, I believe, was not there at all. For some reason best known to the authorities it was evidently deemed advisable that I should see as little as possible of the proceedings and the commissioners—hence my errand.

When I got back to the lounge, the younger of the two men, who was well over sixty, was questioning a patient. This operation lasted perhaps ten seconds,

then he passed on to another. The elder was apparently in an advanced stage of senile decay, and, standing with his hands under his frock-coat tails, gazed vacantly about him. If he attempted to approach a patient the younger man bade him return to his side, which he obediently did; nor did he address any of the patients whilst I was in the room. As the interviews were of but a few seconds' duration with each patient, these were half over when I got back to the lounge; but I meant to speak to one, if not both; so I approached the younger man, who held a note-book in his hand, to which he frequently referred.

"What is your name?" he inquired.

I gave it, and he referred to his book and verified my statement.

"I am very anxious to leave this asylum," I said. "I am not mentally ill. I have no delusions, nor am I suffering from any form of insanity."

The Superintendent here heard my voice, and turning round, placed his hand on my shoulder.

"This was a very bad case," said he in a tone expressive of the evident credit he took to himself for my cure, which he was the last person in the world to deserve. Yet to me individually he did not devote more than one half hour of his precious time throughout the seventeen weeks of my detention.

"Ah, let me see," replied the latter, "I think we have already had some correspondence with reference

to this lady. Well, she seems much better." The doctor drew me away from the commissioner, who was already addressing another patient, and my opportunity vanished, my hopes sank to zero. In a few minutes the gentlemen had left the lounge.

Let no one imagine that the visit of the commissioners as at present carried out is of the slightest help to the patient. Spending at the most ten minutes with twenty patients, how could they discover even the form of insanity from which five suffered?

As they left I found Mrs. Edge standing beside me, and quite ready with her usual douche of cold water.

"Didn't I tell you how 'twould be? Commissioners indeed! What good be they? They'm no better nor the doctors, and God knows they're all a bad lot. If two fools of doctors hadn't sent you here, you'd never have come. More should I. 'Tis all along o' they doctors that we be all 'ere, curse 'em!"

"Now, Mrs. Edge," I said, "you must not be vituperative."

"Well, what be the use o' they Commissioners?" she demanded angrily. "What do 'em do for we? I saw the doctor pull you away from 'em. He wern't goin' to let you say too much; he knows better, he do. Trust a doctor not to give his self away!" and then she began as she always did when the subject of doctors was under discussion to curse them vigorously, as did nearly all the patients.

But I turned away as usual when I heard the bad language, for it always made me shudder, and reminded me so forcibly of my dreadful position.

"Don't go away," said Mrs. Edge. "I won't swear any more if you'll only stay."

She always expressed penitence if I left her vicinity at such times.

The next morning I determined to get speech with the Superintendent, who was then at home.

"Will you tell me," I asked, "why I do not leave? You told me some weeks ago that I might have my discharge. Why do I still stay on? I am perfectly well mentally."

"You might have a relapse," he replied, "and in that case you would be much worse than you were when you came here."

"There was nothing mentally the matter with me when I was brought here," I replied.

"We know better," said the doctor, "and you must wait to see if you get a relapse."

"But how long must I wait?" I inquired anxiously.

"That I cannot tell you, as I do not know," he answered as he walked rapidly away.

And that was all the comfort I could get.

My sisters wrote that in their opinion I should most certainly have a relapse within a short time; my recovery had been too rapid. I must, therefore, remain six months, which was the period a lady, whose acquaintance they had made, and who had been

in the same asylum, had required to effect a cure. As I very naturally replied indignantly urging the injustice of their conduct, and reminding them that in the beginning of my incarceration they had assured me that when I could eat, drink and sleep I should be well enough to leave, and I had been doing all three for three months, they replied that my "mad" letters were quite sufficient proof that I was far from being cured, and that as long as I persisted in my delusion that I had been ill-treated in the "Home" they should not feel justified in undertaking any responsibility with regard to my removal.

I turned the doctor's idea of a relapse into ridicule, referred to it on all occasions, at the table and in the garden, and often asked the patients and attendants if they saw any signs of its approach. "Our infallible Esculapius has prognosticated that I am to have a relapse," I would say. "My sisters agree with him, of course, since they heartily desire it; and so you will have the pleasure of my company for some time longer, I fear."

When I next saw the assistant doctor I asked him if he could detect any signs of an attack.

"I suppose," I said, "it will be *en règle* for me to have this relapse, as you all expect it, but I do not feel in the least like having it. I never felt sounder mentally in my life, but, of course, my feelings have nothing to do with such a matter. The question is

rather what you think, than how or what I know or feel. Do you think I shall have it soon, as I'll be glad to get it over?" To this he made no reply, and when any of the staff expressed surprise—which they frequently did—that my sisters had not removed me, I replied, "O! don't you know, I can't go yet, I've got to wait for a relapse!"

CHAPTER XIII

ATTEMPTS TO REGAIN FREEDOM

The nice attendant whose duties lay with the worst cases came in her turn to sleep in the cubicle room, and I often had a chat with her as we undressed. She expressed much sympathy for me.

"They don't tell you," she said one night, "but it is your sisters who are keeping you here. You could have left the day after the doctor told you he would give you your discharge, or even that day, had they been willing to take the usual responsibility. I know that they refused, and that is why you stay on. It is dreadful for you, and I am so sorry. Never mind, they will certainly be punished. God is just, they will get their deserts. We are all sorry for you."

"What am I to do to get away?" I asked despairingly.

"I only know how the patients in a county asylum leave," she said, for she had spent ten years in one of these institutions, "but in a private asylum the formalities are different, or rather there are no formalities. The doctor tells the friends who petitioned, that in his opinion the patient is in a fit

state to return to his home, and if the relative is willing to remove him or her the patient leaves. In your case the petitioner is not willing." Yet my sister had assured me in her first letter, "You will not stay one hour longer than is absolutely necessary."

I got this attendant to explain to me the necessary formalities which a patient in a county asylum had to go through to prove his sanity, and found that he had to appear before a board of guardians and then a committee, including a doctor and a magistrate.

"Why," I exclaimed, "a patient in a public asylum is much better off than I am here! How I wish I could go before a board of guardians, or any other board; I would soon prove my sanity! But here I can do nothing, there is no board to inquire into my state of mind, no one to whom I can apply, and I am bound to stay here, where I am daily getting worse for want of medical advice, which I can't get. I ought to be dieted, and am paying more here than I should do outside for a good doctor and the food I need." And as soon as I was fully convinced that my sisters kept me, to the detriment of my health, I made up my mind that they should pay for their pleasure. I would refuse absolutely to pay one penny beyond the time the doctor told me I could have my discharge, and I kept my word. My sisters had to pay my bill, to which considerable law expenses were added.

I busied myself during the weary days with my pen, and prepared several articles on the need for

reform in the treatment of the insane, which I hoped might reach the public, when the day of my enlargement should come, as come I had resolved it should in spite of all obstacles. I was hopeful of the good I might effect, for, alas! I had not then experienced the difficulties that hedge about the writer on the subject of the insane. I knew not then that it is a subject on which editors look with fear and disfavour, nor did I know that the free (?) Press of England was rigidly closed to the grievances of the mentally afflicted. That being so, the need for reforms cannot, of course, be made known. Now and then an action is brought by some ill-used patient, but the judgment is always given for the defendants; the judge, like the man in the street, cares nothing for the woes of the friendless lunatic, whom at heart he despises and always disbelieves. The Press treats the whole as a joke, and does not even care to report the case fully, for no readers would be interested in it, and a paper in order to sell must please its customers; but of all this I was blissfully ignorant.

Meanwhile a patient who had entered at least five weeks after myself and who was considered a very bad case, and I know was in the "pads" for nearly a fortnight, had been removed by her husband. Another lady, who was five weeks in the "pads," and then a fortnight in the convalescent ward, had also been removed, and yet I, who was far sounder than either of these, still languished a prisoner.

The unfulfilled hope that I should soon leave the asylum thoroughly unsettled me. I had so far been the most tractable and amenable of patients. I had never once broken the first and foremost of asylum commandments, "Thou shalt give no trouble," and the matron and attendants had often remarked to me that if all patients were made on my pattern asylums would no longer be required.

Knowing that I should leave soon, and being anxious that I should take a favourable impression of the asylum away with me—I presume, at least, this must have been the reason—I was treated almost as an equal by the attendants, and quite politely by the matron, who could be anything but polite on occasion. I was allowed a greater amount of freedom in the house, and went as the spring advanced in and out of the garden at will. I also often wrote in my bedroom, when I wished to be alone, and nothing was said to me, as I know it would have been in the case of some other of the patients, who were more of a fixture than it was likely I should become.

Every patient had stories of losses to relate, when first I arrived, and I was warned to be careful of my things. However, considering the status of the attendants they were fairly honest. One incident in this connection, however, struck me as curious.

Miss Hares, who had not been out all the winter, asked one day for her umbrella, a very handsome one, which probably cost thirty-five shillings.

"You don't want it," shouted the attendant, for the lady was deaf. "It is too cold for you to go out."

"I do want it, and I mean to have it. It ought to be here, in my drawer, where I always keep it, but it has gone, and I mean to know where it is."

"Well, I can't tell you," said the attendant. "You've overlooked it, I dare say; look again and you'll find it."

"I have thoroughly searched, and I know it is not here; but it will have to be found, and you must find it. I don't mean to lose it."

The attendant walked away muttering, "Can-tankerous old thing! I'm not going to find her umbrella." But Miss Hares persisted, and when she lost anything the "Temple" was shaken to its foundations; she gave no one a moment's peace until that article returned, which it usually did for the sake of quietude.

So she fumed and stormed and talked incessantly of the loss of her umbrella, with its real gold top, and her name engraved on a gold band, and as, on occasion she could be very deaf indeed, it was difficult to silence her. Matron, attendants, patients all took it in turn to stem the torrent of her eloquence, but as well might they have attempted to stem the flow of Niagara's waters. Miss Hares turned her deaf ear to each and all, and loudly demanded her umbrella.

At length something had to be done, and a miser-

able specimen was unearthed from somewhere, and triumphantly planted before the incensed lady.

"That's not mine," she exclaimed scornfully. "I could not possess such a thing!" (Which was quite true. Everything Miss Hares possessed was of the best, for she had a good income, and a taste for good things.) "My name is engraved on the gold band of my umbrella. You have all seen it," she declared. "Where is my name on that thing—(contemptuously)—which has not even a band?"

This was so evident, even to the limited intelligence of certified lunatics, who had been exchanging more than two or three glances during the colloquy, that the matron could not do less than institute a thorough search, which proved fruitless and only added to Miss Hares' insistent demands for her missing property. At length one of the attendants remarked that another had used Miss Hares' umbrella, when she went out the previous week. "I thought Miss Hares had lent it to Nurse Jones," she added. So Nurse Jones was questioned.

"No," she said, "I have certainly not used Miss Hares' umbrella. I used my own, which is at present at home, for I left it there when I went home last week."

"Your umbrella is in our bedroom," said a patient, who slept in the same room with Nurse Jones; "I saw it this morning. I will go and fetch it." And in a few moments she returned with it in her hand.

"Then I left Miss Hares' umbrella at home," said the nurse. "I must have taken it in mistake for my own."

How she could have taken it by mistake from Miss Hares' drawer, where the latter jealously guarded it, was asked by neither matron nor attendants; the patients, of course, drew their own conclusions.

"You must bring it back the next time you go home," said the matron. "Miss Hares won't be going out to want it." And the latter lady had to content herself with the information that the umbrella had wandered a distance of ten miles, but would shortly be restored to her. I happened to be in my cubicle, which adjoined Miss Hares, when the attendant Jones, a coarse, lazy, rough woman, who had gained her "experience," on which she plumed herself not a little, in a workhouse ward, and so fitted herself to tyrannize over ladies gently born and reared—returned the missing umbrella to its owner.

"'Ere is your umbrella; it is so like mine, I quite mistook it, and left it at home, but I have brought it back."

"I can't think how it could have got into your quarters," remarked Miss Hares. "I'll see it does not leave my drawer again." And Jones walked away before more could be said.

One morning I went into the drawing-room to write, when the sound of muffled sobs fell on my ear. As there was no one in my part of the room, I

drew aside the dividing curtains, and seated just inside the door, on a corner of an old oak chest, was the elderly deformed lady who had wrestled with the attendant during my second night in the asylum.

A little questioning elicited that the lady, whose name was Pratt, had that morning come from the lower ward, where she had spent nearly eighteen months.

"But are you not glad to leave that dreadful ward to come to this one?" I asked. "Don't cry now. Leave that uncomfortable perch, take this arm-chair, and we can then have a chat."

"I can't! I can't!" she replied, between her sobs. "You don't know how I have been treated all this time. I am not fit to talk to a lady. I feel like a beggar-woman in a palace. Yet I have all my life, until I came here, enjoyed every comfort, and had my own beautiful home."

I had from the first glance noticed a great change in Miss Pratt's appearance, for when I first saw her she did not strike me as a person in affluent circumstances, as she actually was.

The fact was, she resented the familiarity and ill-treatment of the attendants, and suffered accordingly.

"I must go back to No. 2. I cannot stay here," she said. But I detained her.

"You will do nothing of the sort. You will stay

here comfortably in this chair, and I will bring my work to this part of the room, if you do not object."

"O! no," she replied, between her sobs. "How kind you are, and how long it is since I have heard a kind word! I do not know how to behave, please excuse me."

By degrees her sobs ceased, and she was able to talk collectedly, and we stayed until dinner time, when a panic seized the poor lady.

"I can't face them," she cried. "I can't go into the dining-room."

"Oh yes, you can go with me! I'll take you in."

And, arrived there, she was kindly greeted by the patients she knew, and welcomed by Mrs. Edge, who had been her companion in misfortune for many months.

Very silent was Miss Pratt throughout that meal. Afterwards she remarked to me, "'Tis the decency of it all, that is so new to me. Our food was thrown at us over there, as though we had been animals in a menagerie. If you had experienced that, and been treated as I have been, you would shrink from the society of all here, as I do."

But Miss Pratt soon became accustomed to civilization, and old habits re-asserted themselves. She told me that the attendant in the ward she had occupied chiefly was much more humane than Stiles, from whom she had previously suffered cruelly, and

had promised to get her transferred to the convalescent ward.

I noticed that the matron treated Miss Pratt quite differently from anything I had experienced from her. One morning a nurse passing through the lounge said, "Into the garden, ladies," and all but Miss Pratt and I obeyed the command. Then came the matron, and remarked reprovingly to Miss Pratt, "You ought to be in the garden."

"But Miss Hamilcar is here. Surely I may remain also."

"Now, none of your impidence," said the matron. "Go and dress this minnit. I'll give *you* talking to me like that."

But she said not a word to me, and I remained indoors all the morning.

Miss Pratt was gradually given her belongings. Her artificial teeth, of which she had been deprived, and suffered severely in consequence, were the first of her possessions to be restored. She had previous to her illness taken great pride in her personal appearance, and bitterly she deplored the loss of her good looks, and the neglected condition of her once beautiful hair, which had been washed in common soap and hard water, and pulled and dragged by the attendants.

During the first days of her elevation to the best ward, Miss Pratt's modest flights of ambition never once reached the possibility of recovering her liberty.

"Do you not write to your family?" I inquired on one of these early days.

"I have never written one letter since I entered these doors, and I have never properly received my niece and nephew, when they have visited me, for I felt so angry with them for sending me to such an awful place—although they could not help doing so, as the doctors insisted on my coming, and as the matron or a nurse was always in the room, I could not say what I wished."

"Would your relatives be willing to remove you?" I asked.

"They would joyfully take me home, and at the first moment possible."

"Write to them and ask them to take you away; it can do no harm, if not much good."

"I have not written for so long, I should not know what to say."

"Shall I help you?" I asked. "I will willingly do so."

I thought how contrary things are in this life! Here are Miss Needes and Miss Pratt with good homes and relatives to welcome them, but are not fit to go to them; whilst I have no home, yet am quite well enough to leave this place, if my relatives would remove me; and I resolved to help this poor creature, who had suffered much more deeply, and much longer than I, to enjoy again the freedom and comforts of her much-loved home—if I could.

So I urged her to write; but that letter proved a far more serious undertaking than I had anticipated. For the greater part of four days we both worked hard, but the result of our labours was consigned in despair by Miss Pratt to the waste-paper basket; for neither our single nor combined efforts could produce just the letter she wished to write, and she would have abandoned the idea had I permitted her to do so. At the end of the fifth day, however, patience and perseverance triumphed, and a letter was finished.

It had been revised, altered, copied, and re-copied, and every word and sentence most carefully weighed and considered. It was a very short letter after all, and traced in weak, irregular, quavering characters, and lines that sloped diagonally. Perhaps few family epistles have taken longer to write, demanded greater effort on the part of the sender, or incidentally consumed such an amount of writing and other paper; but it effected its purpose, and so was worth all the trouble it had cost. By return Miss Pratt's nephew and niece announced their intended visit that same day, and after the interview she looked positively radiant.

"They will do all that is necessary to get me away in the shortest possible time," she related. "How can I thank you for helping me!"

Another if lesser pleasure awaited her. Later in the day she came to me in great glee, if such a feeling could be experienced in an asylum.

"I am to have Miss Hares' cubicle in your room," she announced joyfully. And her intense, though subdued enjoyment of the semi-privacy the cubicle afforded, and of the articles on the dressing-table and wash-stand was pathetic in the extreme.

"A ewer and basin to myself! My own soap and towel! To dress and undress myself! To dress my own hair! If I could only give you an idea of the bliss of it! How shall I feel when I get back to my own beautiful room if this is so delightful!" she murmured.

Miss Pratt's relatives came frequently to see her during the ten days following the receipt of that wonderful letter, and she was treated every day by the staff with increasing consideration, but she had many uneasy half hours, and confided her difficulties to me.

"I have a great deal to face when I get home," she said, "for I cannot ignore what I have lost in coming to this house. I shall never fill my old place again."

"That feeling will pass away when you get home," I assured her. "You will forget all that has happened here, for none of your relatives and friends will be cruel enough to remind you of it."

"Forget what I have borne here!" she repeated. "Not if I lived on this earth for ten thousand times ten thousand years should I forget!"

After her removal, which took place ten days after

the visit of her relatives, she wrote me a very happy letter, in which she hoped most heartily that I, and others still in durance vile, would be soon enjoying, as she was, the delights of freedom, and the joys of home.

“Everyone is so kind, and I had such a hearty welcome, that I forgot the anxieties I had often discussed with you,” she remarked.

CHAPTER XIV

FURTHER EFFORTS FOR RELEASE

Only once was I threatened with banishment to the lower ward during the time I spent in the asylum, and it came about on this wise: I had asked the assistant doctor if he possessed a medical directory. He replied in the affirmative, and then asked why I made the inquiry. I replied that I wanted an address, which I had forgotten.

"If you will give me the name, I will find the address and give it you."

"I prefer to find it myself, thank you, if you will give me the book."

"I cannot give you the book," he replied.

"Why not? I shall not damage it."

"I cannot let you have the book," was all he would say.

"O! It doesn't matter. I shall soon be leaving, and can find a copy in any public reading-room; I will not trouble you to hunt up the address," I replied shortly.

But I felt annoyed at his refusal, and was relating the incident to one of the patients in the lounge some

half an hour later, and expressed my annoyance at the doctor's incivility in stronger terms than I should have employed had I been aware of the matron's presence. As I was in the middle of a sentence, certainly not complimentary to the assistant doctor, whom I always called "Gaoler No. 2," the matron interrupted angrily :

"Will you stop grumblin', Miss 'Amilcar? You are a perfect nuisance lately. Nothing is right for you. If I hear any more of this nonsense, you will just go from this to No. 2. There you can grumble to your 'art's content, but I'm not going to put up with it 'ere !"

So I wisely subsided, for I knew that for the slightest offence patients were banished to lower wards, the doctors not taking into consideration that their recovery might thereby be seriously retarded, if not rendered impossible; the recovery of a patient being a matter of so slight an importance in the doctor's estimation that it deserved no consideration from him or his subordinates.

The question of my removal worried me night and day. I wrote often to my sisters urging them to act, and citing the case of another patient, and the ease with which she was liberated, because her friends did all in their power to expedite matters. I besought them to do the same, but my letters remained unanswered. On the few occasions on which I saw the Superintendent I made anxious inquiries as to my

removal. "It rests with your sisters, not with me," was all he would say, in his jerky, hurried way, and I could get no more out of him.

Some days later the assistant doctor had made the rounds, the Superintendent being away for ten days. As he—the assistant doctor—was "not official," I had not addressed any inquiry to him. But this morning I had counted on hearing from my brother or sisters, and as no letter had come from either I had lost my patience, and was feeling very irritable and angry. After returning the doctor's "Good morning," I metaphorically fell upon him.

"You are not official, I know," I said, "but as I cannot see the Superintendent I must ask you to tell me why I am kept here week after week, when he has given me my discharge. Miss Pratt left a fortnight after she came into this ward. She was not as well as I have been ever since I entered these doors, yet I have been here fourteen weeks, and nine since the doctor told me I might go."

"I cannot tell you," he replied. The matron's face always assumed a mask-like expression, or rather lack of any expression during the doctor's rounds. It now, however, suddenly awoke into life at the unexpected vehemence of my words, which had taken her by surprise.

"Well," I said. "I think it right to give you all notice," and I included the matron in my comprehensive glance, "that I shall refuse to pay one farthing

for my board here from the time the doctor told me I might go. I ought not to pay anything at all, for I did not require an asylum, but I have all my life paid for everything I have had, so I suppose I must pay for this. But now I have warned you, I shall *not* pay for remaining here longer than five weeks."

"The notice to me is completely useless," said the doctor. "I have nothing to do with any financial arrangements you or your friends may have made, and I am at a loss to know why you address me on the subject."

"Because you can convey my notice to those who have made arrangements," I replied. "It is now ten days since I saw the Superintendent, and when he comes back he will have no time to give me."

"I have no wish to pry into your financial affairs," replied the doctor, "or to detain you, and I can do nothing whatever in the matter of your leaving," and with that he walked away.

"Don't forget my warning; I generally keep my word," I said as he passed down the room. And I did keep my word, as the Superintendent found to his cost later on.

I have said that I was a most amenable patient, and that I had rarely grumbled. The reason for this was chiefly that I had been told from the first that my enlargement depended solely on the doctor. To annoy him was, I knew, the most senseless thing I could do.

"No one," wrote my sister, "can detain you in an asylum if you are mentally sound. As soon as you are well, you will leave."

But I was mentally sound, bar the effects of the excessive drugging, when I came, yet I had been detained for fifteen weeks, and how was I to prove that I was well now? I had made every effort to recover my physical health, and the diseases from which I now suffered, and for which I sorely needed medical attention, were the result of the doctors' and attendants' inhumanity. As far as I could I had taken every care of my health, but I was powerless to alter the conditions of my every-day life, which I knew increased my maladies. If I could get away now I could regulate my life and, with care, perhaps stem the disease; if I remained where I was I knew that I should become a helpless cripple and a hopeless invalid as long as I lived.

I had resolved again and again that I would get away, and now I made up my mind, after a careful survey of the situation, that I would try if I could grumble myself out, and as if to aid me in this resolve the very peremptory attendant who had carried the art of shutting patients up to its very highest degree of perfection had left.

This objectionable attendant's successor was of another calibre. True, she had spent her working life so far in a county asylum, but was inclined to treat private patients with more consideration, and

she allowed remarks to go unnoticed that from the other attendant would have called for severe rebuke. We all, therefore, spoke more freely at the meals at which this attendant presided, viz., tea and supper, and discussed the miserable food and the shortcomings of the cook with an outspokenness that would not for two seconds have been tolerated when first I made acquaintance with the lounge and its inmates.

I daily complained of the rigorous climate, and, indeed, of this I did not complain without cause, for what I suffered during my detention from the Arctic temperature I cannot describe. As the winter lasted well into June, my complaints were long and loud. One day at dinner the housekeeper, who on certain days dined with us, mentioned that all the gooseberries in the neighbourhood had been blighted by the unusual and excessive cold of the late frosts.

"But you could not expect to grow fruit of any description, even in the mildest of seasons, in this arctic climate," I remarked. The woman turned to give me a sharp retort, but the matron interposed:

"We are all so accustomed to Miss 'Amilcar's hourly grumbling at our climate we have got quite used to it, and it really does not affect us now."

Some days after, as the woman passed through the lounge, I asked her for some article of clothing that had not been returned from the laundry, and expressed a hope that it would not share the fate of several of my things.

"Now, just stop that," said the woman. "We're all getting sick of your grumbling, and *I'm* not going to put up with it, I can tell you."

"If I grumble," I replied, "it is not without cause, and I certainly have the right if my things are lost," but the woman was by that time out of hearing. She had flounced out of the lounge. The spell works, I thought; I shall go on.

I often sparred with the assistant doctor, whom I made my pencil-sharpener-in-chief, as no certified lunatic was allowed to possess a pen-knife, and I wrote a great deal, for convenience, with a pencil. I was often at a standstill on account of a pointless lead, until I hit upon the happy idea of commandeering the services of the assistant doctor.

"As the rules of this establishment do not permit me to possess so formidable a weapon as a pen-knife," I said, "I am compelled to ask you either to lend me yours or to yourself sharpen these for me." And I held some half-dozen pointless leads. "You can leave me your knife with perfect safety, I shall neither damage it nor injure any one or myself with it."

"I prefer to sharpen the leads myself," he returned, quite good-naturedly. As he gathered up the pencils I remarked, "You will be grateful to me for providing you with a light and agreeable occupation to fill your elegant but very tedious leisure in these remote wilds, for I warn you I shall keep you well employed." When he returned them, in thanking him I added a

few words in commendation of the excellence of his performance.

"An instance of the laws of heredity," he replied. "My father was an architect, consequently an adept at sharpening pencils."

Another time he chatted with Miss Devise as he passed through the lounge, and made some disparaging remark to her on her sex as organizers. I was seated near Miss Devise, therefore heard the conversation.

"Whether women can, or cannot, organize," I remarked, "my residence here has proved to me that there is one wide field from which they are now shut out that would be immensely benefited by their even bad organization and administration."

"What field is that?" he asked sharply.

"The care of the insane," I replied. "There ought to be as many women as men commissioners, and a resident woman doctor in every lunatic asylum in which women are confined."

The doctor's face amused me intensely, although I showed no sign. He flushed a dark red, and exclaimed angrily: "You are talking of a subject of which you are utterly ignorant. Women commissioners and doctors indeed!"

"I am in a better position than you are to judge of the necessity," I replied calmly, "because I have personally felt the need of what I suggest, which you cannot have done."

"I should absolutely refuse to work under or with them," he stormed.

"You'll have to or give up your position here," I said. "When women get the vote, reforms urgently needed will follow, and women will assist in the management of asylums, as they ought to do now if women are confined in them."

"The subject is too ridiculous, and I refuse to discuss it with you," he said angrily, as he marched with all the dignity he could assume out of the lounge.

"You are wise to beat a retreat," I called after him, "for you would certainly be beaten if you remained to discuss the subject."

I had discovered quite early in my sojourn at the "Temple" that the word lunatic asylum was not in favour as a designation for the establishment. I invariably used it, although the attendants never failed to correct me.

"But it *is* an asylum. I *am* a certified lunatic; nearly all the patients are certified lunatics. Why may I not call the house and its inmates by their proper name?"

"Because we never use the word here; the patients do not like it."

"But I like it, and surely I may be allowed to be the exception. Besides, as I am a certified lunatic, I prefer to be called a certified lunatic. I was told I was in a private home, doing the rest-cure, when I came here first, but I didn't believe it, because I

knew my sisters and the woman had made me a lunatic. However, to please you, I will call this establishment—most inappropriately, of course—but then everything in a lunatic asylum is inappropriate, the ‘Temple of Hygeia.’ ”

But the attendants were as utterly ignorant of the word and its meaning as they were of the cult of the goddess, and as their tongues, accustomed only to the pure and undefiled vernacular of their respective counties, could not be brought into any position which enabled them to pronounce the foreign word, I substituted the English, and one night at tea I announced that I had found a delightful name for the establishment, which all could pronounce.

“When I can remember to do so, I will call this rest-cure establishment the ‘Temple of Health,’ instead of a lunatic asylum,” I said gravely. But the forbidden word was ever on my tongue, more especially after I had decided to grumble myself out of the asylum.

At tea-time one day, during the reign of the peremptory attendant, the patient who had lately arrived from the neighbourhood in which I had lived was the subject of conversation, and the attendant remarked that she would soon be returning to her home, as her illness was but a slight one.

“Is she a certified lunatic?” I asked quite innocently. This was probably the first time I had used the expression at a meal in the presence of at least

ten patients, and I noticed that every one, except poor Miss Needes, who seldom paid much heed to the conversation, and the poor thing, who even during meals kept up her incessant muttering and chattering, looked at me as though I had said something very unusual.

"This is a 'ome, Miss 'Amilcar," said the attendant severely, "and we never call it an asylum. The doctor would be very annoyed if he knew that you had asked such a question."

"How silly," I replied. "We all know this is an asylum; why should we not call it so? I am a certified lunatic, but I was never as mentally ill as this patient, therefore if I was one, she must be also. My question is a very natural one."

The round-faced old lady, at my remark, began to show signs of unusual interest in the conversation.

"What is she talking about?" she asked of the company in general, pointing with her plump white hand at me.

"You look upon this as your 'ome, don't you?" asked the attendant.

"I've brought my piano and all my pictures and books here. I suppose it is my home. But the dinners and teas are not half as good as at Mrs. Dash's where I was before I came here. I can't understand why."

"There," said the attendant to me, interrupting the old lady's unusual volubility, "you've upset this poor

lady. She has no idea this is anything but a 'ome, and it is a 'ome to 'er."

"So it may be. It is certainly no home to me," I replied. "I can see no harm in calling a house by its proper name."

"Well, drop it," said the attendant, "unless you wish very much to annoy the doctor."

Of course, I knew that the most senseless thing I could do if I did not wish to make this or some other "Temple" my 'ome for the rest of my natural life, was to annoy the doctor; for my fate lay in his hands only. I therefore refrained from continually calling myself a lunatic, but when I found that my reticence brought no reward I threw caution to the winds.

Just before this a patient returned who had been in the asylum twice before, for short periods, as she had derived great benefit from the bracing air.

Finding herself on the verge of a serious breakdown, she now voluntarily entered the asylum, in the hope that by so doing she might avert a serious attack. She suffered from a spasmodic jerking out of words—sometimes bad ones—yet she was a very good woman. It seemed that she had no control over the choice of these words, and was often not aware that she had uttered them.

This new-comer had not been long in the house before she remarked on my frequent use of the terms lunatic and lunatic asylum.

"Why do you use those terms so often?" she asked.

"I don't think I ever heard them during the whole time I have spent here until now."

"I like to call things by their right names," I replied. "I am a certified lunatic, in a lunatic asylum. Why should I attempt to blind myself to two such very palpable facts? You, of course, are different, you are a voluntary patient."

"But I was not the first time I came here," she replied. "Yet I never heard the word applied to me, or to any one else."

"Perhaps you came under different circumstances," I remarked.

"I knew that I required restraint, and I dreaded for my children to see me, should I get like my brother, so I willingly came that they might not guess the nature of my illness, and when I find an attack coming on. I believe I am acting for the best in coming here again."

"I have no doubt you are," I replied, "but I was mentally sound when I came here."

"You struck me as being quite well when I first saw you, and I have seen nothing to lead me to alter my opinion," she replied. "I cannot understand why you have not left."

"Because you could not understand sisters behaving as mine have done, and are still doing. Thanks to them I came to an asylum and, thanks to them, I am still a lunatic."

"O! Don't use that word," she entreated. "I can't bear to hear it."

“And I don’t like to hear the words you ejaculate,” I replied.

“Then correct me every time, and I will be grateful and also correct you.”

The change of air worked an improvement in the poor lady who, in a fortnight, was able to control her speech ; but before the end of that time she had grown tired of trying to cure me of my offences, although out of consideration to her feelings I refrained as much as possible in her presence.

I grumbled at everything, and at all times and seasons. I often asserted at the meals at which the new attendant presided—I was more guarded when the matron was present—that if the doctor would allow me three shillings and sixpence per head for the food of each person in his house I would not only provide a far better and more varied table, with far better cooking, consequently more wholesome and healthy than that now set before us, but I would make a profit of at least twenty pounds per annum !

“The herring I had for dinner,” I would say, “cost, as the doctor buys it, not more than a farthing, the potatoes and bread a halfpenny, the chicken rice and skimmed milk that made the pudding that followed my herring, not more than one penny, total cost one penny three-farthings ; therefore the eighteen persons who dined in this room to-day did so at a cost of two shillings and ninepence halfpenny, and of this I am convinced, no dinner I have ever seen here has cost

more than threepence per head, the other meals not more than twopence. What a profit I should make !”

Sometimes the other patients would differ from me, and excited arguments followed, the attendant saying but little, for she had privately informed me that the food was greatly inferior to that provided for the staff in the county asylum, where she had spent ten years.

Shortly after this another attendant was engaged. She was a young widow who, before her marriage, had been in an asylum as servant or attendant. Her duties were in the convalescent ward, and she consequently took her meals there. I noticed that for two days she turned the meat over and over again on her plate at dinner, and that she took but one mouthful of the unwholesome-looking slices, and ate only the bread beside her plate. At breakfast, tea and supper she ate bread and butter only, and very little of that.

I remarked after the meals, “The woman will starve; she has not eaten one meal in three days! *She* won’t stay. She does not like living on three shillings per week, although her betters have to. Happy woman ! She can go away ; we cannot.”

And leave she did on the fourth day. When surprise was expressed at her short stay by the patients, they were informed that she had lost her nerve; but as there were no cases in the convalescent ward requiring the exercise of nerve or will power on the part of the attendants this was but a poor excuse, and I did not lose the opportunity of enlarging on the real reason of her sudden departure.

Her place was taken by a girl, who had been in a little shop in her native town, but the confinement told on her health. She was tall and weedy in figure, and very thin and scraggy, and although not yet twenty, had lost all her top front teeth. She had little of the asylum attendant in her appearance, which was most delicate, and she had, of course, had no training for the work she had undertaken. I was not slow to remark on this to her. "Oh, yes, I have," she replied, with the strongest Hampshire twang; "I have attended an ambulance class!" And this was, then, the sole preparation needed for ministering to diseased minds; whilst, for the body, nurses are compelled to undergo a severe training extending into several years; yet diseases of the mind are far more subtle than those of the body, and call for greater skill, intelligence, and knowledge from those who minister to them. But a shop-girl, who had attended an ambulance class was deemed sufficiently well-trained to be given the charge of so difficult and complicated a case as Miss Needes.

Now, Miss Needes paid a high weekly fee for a special attendant, because hers was a bad case. The woman who left Miss Hares' umbrella at her home was called her nurse, but fortunately for the poor girl she gave her certainly not more, on an average, than one day in the week; for this woman, who had the most callous heart and the most aggravating manner it is possible to imagine, was often away attending

on patients who required a mental nurse in their homes. How I pitied the poor things! Although perhaps she would not attempt the cruelties she practised on an asylum patient in a private house. She was one of the most ignorant of the ignorant "nurses," and her hourly companionship must have been a cruel penance to a refined, cultured girl of Miss Needes' type.

The result was that although Miss Needes paid this high fee she had no special attendant, and as she could not be left alone for a moment she had to be with the "nurses" wherever their duties as housemaids called them. Consequently, when bedrooms were cleaned, the poor girl sat for a couple of hours on a chair in the middle of the room, whilst the attendant swept and brushed, with all the windows open in an arctic temperature. The doctor did not trouble himself about her comfort or discomfort. I have also seen her special attendant on the rare occasions when she was free from work at night in the asylum, or away from it, order Miss Needes to remove the breakfast things, which the woman was too lazy to do herself. The poor girl's limbs, and more especially her arms, jerked dreadfully, and she had no power to stop them. One morning the woman put a large, heavy dish-cover into her hand.

"Carry that to the pantry," she said in her most domineering manner.

The girl tried for several minutes to take hold of

the cover, but could not do so on account of the twitching of her arms.

"Will you do as I tell you?" said the woman angrily. "I can't wait all day for you here."

The scorn on the "you" I cannot describe adequately in words. After some half-dozen attempts the patient got the cover into her hand, then her arm gave a violent jerk, which she could in no way control, and the cover would have fallen had it not struck the attendant on the arm.

As she received the blow the woman called out angrily :

"Here's Miss Needes at her old pranks again ! She has struck me with all her strength with this dish cover ! Look at the bruise on my arm !"

The matron and several attendants hastened to the dining-room, where the scene took place, and where the indignant attendant was scolding the poor girl, who had no idea what it was all about. She received a scolding in chorus, and the attendant exhibited her bruise—which she richly deserved, indeed, had she received her deserts she would have been badly hurt—to all and sundry for the next two or three days.

Another day Miss Needes was taken by this same nurse to the lower regions, where she remained standing for at least an hour, whilst the rods of several staircases were polished, as this was one of the duties of this attendant. She was given a rubber and told to put the finishing touches to the rods, but, surely,

if the relatives, or Miss Needes herself, paid for a special attendant, that attendant should have been with her in the room the patient was supposed to occupy. Would the nurse of a sane person be allowed to take a sane patient to cold sculleries and icy bedrooms to the detriment of her health? And, surely, if Miss Needes paid for the services of one attendant she ought to have had those exclusive services, not to have been put into the charge of attendants who were supervising perhaps eight or ten patients, or be made to stand by whilst they performed their domestic duties, regardless of her health and comfort, nor would she, had the doctor not known that being a mental patient she had no redress. If the poor girl had told her friends he could bring all his staff to contradict her statements, and himself assert that the girl was suffering from delusions, therefore her word was not to be trusted, and who would believe the girl, who would confirm her statement? Only her fellow-patients who were no more to be believed than she herself. So the sane take advantage of the insane, and the apathy of the public facilitates their being fleeced and worse by those entrusted with their care.

CHAPTER XV

NEAR THE GOAL

One night, the second after the new shop-girl attendant's arrival, the woman who was called Miss Needes' nurse, but who—fortunately for her—was rarely with her, came during the night to our cubicle room, where the first slept, and began a long conversation with her. The entrance of the woman, with the lantern, and the sound of voices awoke me, and I heard a great deal of what was said, although I had no wish or intention to play the *rôle* of eavesdropper. The nurse was evidently tutoring the newly-arrived.

"Begin as you mean to go on," she said. "Stand no nonsense, give it 'em strong at first, and then keep 'em down, that's my way. They gives me no trouble. I don't let 'em; I'll stand none o' their nonsense, and they knows it."

When first I was in the asylum, this attendant brought me my medicine—if she happened to think of it. I had my medicine—although the doctor never failed to tell me he considered me in a dying state when I entered his "Temple"—at any time convenient to those whose duty it was to administer it. If it were

forgotten I went without, and I certainly was none the worse for the doses I missed.

This same attendant had been asked to give me some tabloids during my second week. She forgot them for a night or two, but appeared in my cubicle as I was getting into bed on the third night with two huge things, much too big for my small throat.

"Now, then," she commanded, "take these 'ere things sharp now, I'm tired, and 'ave got no time to waste on *you*."

I often at this time would say to the attendants, "You treat the patients as though they were dirt under your feet. Does it never occur to you that it is their money that keeps and pays you and the doctors, and that maintains this house? You might, if for this consideration alone, treat us with some show of respect. Where would you all be but for us?"

But my words fell on deaf ears. However, I tried to induce the raw girl to treat Miss Needes kindly.

"Ask yourself," I said, "if you would like to be treated, or, indeed, for a sister of yours to be treated, as that poor girl is. Try to help her to get better, don't do the very thing that you know will annoy her. She never can get well here, she has no chance. I wish I could take her away. If I had the sole charge of her, she would soon recover."

And this conviction I almost every day openly expressed, and asserted that the poor girl was being driven into a chronic state of mania. I often doubted

if she were insane at all. Certainly if the doctor had been paid to render the girl a hopeless lunatic he could not have adopted a surer method than that he pursued if the daily torture the poor girl suffered at the hands of all the attendants could be dignified by the term "method." The responsibility of her recovery rested with the doctor, and he, and he alone, had the power to improve the conditions under which she lived, all of which only increased her malady.

"What would you do with her, I wonder?" said an attendant superciliously.

"I should take her home," I replied, "where she begs so piteously to go every hour of the day, and never let her see a nurse's uniform. I should give her a quiet bedroom, in which she would have a chance of getting sound natural sleep, for ten hours out of the twenty-four until she had made up arrears. I should feed her nerves and body with good, wholesome food, well-cooked and suited to her individually. I should occupy her mind with pleasant sensations and distractions; provide amusement and occupation for her for every waking hour, and, above all, I should be kind to her. In a month she would be another being, and there would be a marked improvement in her mentally and physically."

As every word uttered by a patient in an asylum is heard by attendants or doctors, my speeches reached the Superintendent, and I noticed a marked change in his manner to me as compared with the last arrivals.

I could, with the greatest difficulty, get speech with him, for with a curt "Good morning," he hurried from my neighbourhood, his manner more jerky than ever. Yet he would stop to exchange a remark or two with the two latest arrivals.

I had, from the first day I entered the asylum, asserted to doctors, matron, attendants, and patients, that I was not insane, but suffering only from starvation and the effects of the excessive drugging. The matron at first took no notice of my statement, but when I had grown stronger physically she began to differ from me, and said that when I came first I screamed aloud. I asked her how she would have behaved placed as I was.

"Had you been hustled out of a bed into a blanket, and carried by three strange women, who enjoyed your terror, you knew not where, I think you would have screamed as much or more than I did. I consider that a patient entering an asylum for the first or hundredth time for the matter of that, should be so treated that he or she would not require to scream. I was terrified out of my senses, but surely treatment that induces fear and terror can only be most injurious to an unhinged mind."

This had doubtless been repeated to the Superintendent, for one morning he stopped and remarked in his hurried jerky manner, "You were very bad when you came here." "I was very ill physically," I replied, "but I was not out of my mind."

"You were very ill mentally," he insisted.

"No," I said. "I was only dazed with drugs, but whatever may have been the matter with me then, now I am mentally sound. My sister has many times assured me that mentally sound people are not kept in asylums. Why are you keeping me here? Am I still to wait for a relapse?"

But the doctor was out of hearing, although I followed him out of the lounge before I had finished. It was always the same; the doctor always fled when I asked him why he kept me in his asylum.

One day, three weeks before I left, I asked the matron, as I was daily accustomed to do, if she had heard from my sisters as to the date of my departure. She replied that she had not.

"When am I to leave?" I asked impatiently.

"Well," replied the matron, "you insist that you did not require to come here, and until you can feel and see that you did, you cannot be fit to go."

"Do you mean that I shall stay here until I say that I was out of my mind when I came, and is that the reason why I am kept here?" I demanded.

"Not perhaps that altogether, but you must acknowledge that had you not required treatment, you would not have been sent here."

"If I have to acknowledge that in order to get away, I shall be a fixture for life, for I will never admit it. Of course I was physically ill, and I was dazed with drugs, but I had no delusions, no hallucinations, no

mania; how could I have required what you call "treatment?" " But to this the matron had no reply.

The matron had always been at some pains to impress upon me how very bad I was when admitted, and when I shrank from looking at or meeting the bad cases in the house or garden, as I invariably did during the first few weeks of my residence in the asylum, she never failed to remark, "But you were just as bad as they are when first you came."

I as invariably denied that such was the case, and asked how it was that I had recovered whilst they had got worse; but the matron could always be conveniently and discreetly silent, when occasion demanded, and my very pertinent question never received an answer. I had always been most anxious from the moment I entered the asylum to know from what form of insanity I had suffered. I questioned the matron and attendants, but could get no satisfactory reply; indeed it is very doubtful if either could have distinguished one phase from another.

The peremptory attendant was by far the most intelligent of all. She was the only one of the twelve who had received any kind of training, and, as she belonged to the artisan class, had received the usual Board School education. She had spent many years in county asylums, and had received her training in sick nursing in the infirmaries of these institutions, and had there, doubtless, acquired her very peremptory manner.

As she really knew something of her business, I took every opportunity, but in vain, of trying to elicit from her the form of insanity from which I was supposed to have suffered.

I would offer to do needle-work for her, and then I would say, "I am, as you know, interested in mental diseases. What, now, does Miss C—— suffer from?"

"Hallucinations of hearing," she would reply promptly.

She not only suffered from this but feared to eat a good meal or take an extra slice of bread and butter, lest six men should die in her native town. I sometimes insisted on her taking another slice at supper, and when I got up to the bedroom she invariably said, "O, Miss Hamilcar, I have suffered for that extra slice. They have given it to me, and dreadful things are going to happen," and nothing I could say could convince her to the contrary.

Then I would continue, "What is Miss H——'s particular form of insanity?"

"Well, to be quite plain-spoken, an insane temper," was the reply, which was as far as I could judge perfectly correct also.

"And the little round fat lady?"

"She hears voices."

"And what am I suffering from?"

"Ah! That's quite another matter. I'm not going to tell you."

"Because you cannot," I would reply.

The housemaid in the convalescent ward left about a fortnight before I did. She had been eight years in the Superintendent's service, and was a woman of perhaps thirty years of age. She had shown me many little attentions, was a thoroughly good servant, and superior to the attendants in manners and speech. She had often remarked to me that she could not understand why I had been sent to the asylum as I was so different from the other patients. I asked her to find out for me what form of insanity I was supposed to be suffering from, and to report the result. She promised to do so, but she, too, could get no satisfactory reply to any question on the subject.

"I have asked again and again," she often said. "I put it in this way, 'What's the matter now with Miss Hamilcar? If she's insane 'tis in a different way from anybody else here. Whatever has she got? She seems quite right to me, and has ever since she came here.' All I can get out of them is, 'Ah! *You* don't know.' And I believe *they* don't, either.'"

Some few weeks after I left the asylum I met this servant accidentally, when I had gone for a long walk to a neighbouring village, in which she happened to live. She was delighted to find that I had succeeded in regaining my liberty.

"I always said," she asserted, "that there was nothing the matter with you. Eight years in an asylum teaches one a little, and I never could find out

in what way you were insane; you were as sensible as I myself from the moment I first saw you. And O! it *was* a shame to cut off your hair!" When I remarked that that was but one of the acts of cruelty from which I had suffered in that terrible "Home," she replied:

"Ah! And there is much goes on in those two lower wards that ought never to be allowed. I saw how the poor things were treated and fed. It is not my business to spread it abroad, but I did feel sorry for those poor creatures, shut up all day long, year in, year out, with nothing to do, nothing to interest them, nothing to amuse them, nothing to live for. No wonder they all got worse instead of better!"

And the insane will continue to get worse in asylums until their disease is treated as scientifically, as skilfully and as sensibly as are the physical diseases of the sane.

Every day I looked anxiously for letters, and every day brought only disappointment. My sisters wrote but seldom, and when they did their letters were brief and related chiefly to business matters concerning the transfer of my lease, or the sale of my furniture and effects, which they were fully determined should be managed by themselves alone. Of my departure they said very little, beyond expressing regret that I was so bent upon hastening my cure.

I then wrote to my sisters that as my symptoms grew worse I had fully made up my mind to escape

from the asylum since I could get no medical treatment, and if I remained I might become a helpless invalid.

As I was free to go from one part of the house to the other to escape from the asylum would not have been very difficult to plan and to carry out had I been possessed of enough money to pay my fare to a friend's house. My kind sisters—to whom I had very imprudently made over the money in my banking account, and entrusted with my securities—had considerably sent me the handsome sum of three shillings, and that amount was all I received of my own money during my seventeen weeks' detention. I had spent it all in medicine, for I suffered cruelly from indigestion, and could not procure what I had always taken and which suited me in the "Temple," although it was simple and harmless. Unrefined Epsom salts was the universal panacea there, and for indigestion, the only obtainable remedy was hot water. As I could not take the former, and the latter gave me no relief, I bought the medicine I had been accustomed to take.

The assistant doctor had once, at the matron's request, mixed me an evil-looking compound, which I refused to take, as I did not know its contents. I explained to the doctor that I could read a prescription, and liked to know what I was taking, and that if he would let me look at the prescription or give me the simple medicines I named, I would take the former

if I approved of it, though I preferred the latter. He refused to do either, so I purchased what I knew would give me relief, through the patients or attendants when they went to the nearest town. Therefore, my purse was empty and I had no means of refilling it, and to attempt to escape without money was useless.

The departure of the peremptory attendant who had nursed Miss Hares before she came to the asylum very much upset that lady, who had always regarded her as her own particular property. I had often wondered how Miss Hares had drifted into an asylum for, except for her temper, which was often violent, she was as sane as the doctor. She had a brother to whom she was very much attached, and who was exceedingly good and kind to her. His son came frequently to see her, and she had a great number of correspondents; she received many handsome presents and was by no means left alone, or forsaken by her friends. She, too, was most anxious to leave the asylum, and had fully made up her mind that she would do so in the summer.

At first Miss Hares was inclined to be very disagreeable to me, because I opened my window at night, but when she was not well I offered to do several small things for her, for I felt very sorry for her. All her life she had lived in a luxurious home, been waited upon by good servants, and had everything she could desire or wish for. Now, in her old age, when she required care and comfort, she got

neither; she had to sleep in a north room between a window that admitted the icy blasts and a door, which kept up a current of air, and this room she shared with five strangers. She who had always had a handsome bedroom with ample wardrobes and chests of drawers had now but one combined article of furniture for her individual use, and one peg in a wardrobe not half the size of the one in her room at home, of which she had enjoyed the exclusive use. Little wonder that she grumbled at the discomforts of her accommodation, and that she was vexed that her handsome dresses, mantles, etc., were scattered about in her trunks to which she could not have access in the nether regions of the "Temple" because there was no room in the cubicle for their accommodation. She had lost many of her things, and incidents similar to the spiriting away of her handsome umbrella did not tend to reassure her as to the safety of her scattered belongings.

When Miss Hares became convinced that I was willing to render her any service in my power, she quite changed in her manner towards me, and made me her confidante. One day I asked her what circumstances led to her coming to the asylum, and she gave me her story. She had, it appears, spent the greater part of her life in one of the eastern counties, where she and a sister had lived with their parents in a commodious and very comfortable house. When the parents died, she and her sister continued

to occupy this house. Some ten years later the sister died also, and as Miss Hares was then suffering very badly from gout, which caused her finger nails to fall off, causing much suffering, she was advised by her doctors—in common with all the patients in the “Temple,” Miss Hares blamed the doctors entirely for her detention in an asylum—to give up her home and to take rooms on the South Coast, where the climate would be much more suitable. She was assured that she could not be cured if she remained in her old home. Very unwillingly Miss Hares sold the furniture that she had lived with all her life, and set forth to seek for health in lodgings. She appeared at first to have been very fortunate in finding very suitable rooms with superior people with whom she was very comfortable and where she remained for eight or ten years, at the end of which time the people gave up the house, and she was obliged, unfortunately for her, to make a change. For several years she wandered from town to town, endeavouring to find a comfortable permanent resting-place, but finding none.

Then she met a lady with whom she struck up a friendship, and this lady persuaded her to leave her rooms and join her in a doctor's family at an inland watering-place, where the friend had arranged to spend the winter. When, however, the two had been settled a fortnight in the family the friend was called away, and Miss Hares found herself alone

amongst very uncongenial people. The inducement to go to this town had been the companionship of the friend in walks and excursions, but now poor Miss Hares scarcely ever went out, because she disliked going alone, and the doctor's wife did not care to accompany her. Evidently Miss Hares made a mistake in allowing the friend to make all the arrangements with the doctor, and it was only on her arrival that she discovered that the latter was a rigid teetotaller, and forbade the taking of stimulants at his table. Now, Miss Hares had all her life been accustomed to take wine with her luncheon and dinner, or ale or stout if she felt inclined, also brandy or whiskey if she had a cold. She told me that she could not do without stimulants—or thought she could not—without injury to her health, and the doctor, on her representations, permitted her to have stimulants in her bedroom; but she was so very uncomfortable in every way in this family that she determined to seek for rooms, when she was taken very ill with bronchitis. Her stock of stimulants became exhausted, and the doctor forbade her to renew them. She became very weak and ill, and felt a curious “sinking,” which she attributed to the want of the alcohol to which she had all her life been accustomed. She grew much worse, and another doctor was called in, who recommended a nurse, as her hostess refused to take any responsibility in connection with her guest's illness. A nurse came, but Miss Hares grew weaker and eventually

became delirious. Another doctor was called in, and at length as she grew worse instead of better, the Superintendent of the asylum was sent for.

When he had seen Miss Hares he suggested that one of his staff should replace the trained nurse, and he sent the peremptory attendant, who remained a fortnight. The doctor's wife was most anxious that her guest should leave, and from what I could gather insisted on Miss Hares being removed to a home. Naturally the Superintendent under the circumstances advised—he knew that Miss Hares was very well off—that she should come to his "Temple," and thereupon arrangements were made for her to be removed within three hours of his proposal.

"They said I had refused to eat," she said, as she related her story, "and that I screamed. I certainly had no appetite, but in other illnesses my appetite had failed, nor am I singular in that respect. Invalids generally eat less than people in health, so that could scarcely be a reason for making a lunatic of me, and I may have screamed when delirious. Anyway, the doctors signed a petition, and I came here. I had to pay heavy fees to the four doctors, and the expense of coming here was also very high. But I made one or two stipulations before I would consent to be removed, and one was that I should have a bedroom facing south to myself. This the doctor promised me, and I had Miss Devise's room, in which I was fairly comfortable. Then when Miss Devise wrote to say

she was returning, after I had been here some three months, the doctor told me that he could no longer let me have that room as Miss Devise had occupied it when she was here before and she wished to have it again. I was dreadfully upset. What could I do? The doctor said I should go into the cubicle room, which is heated by pipes. But I have never been well since I occupied it, for I have all my life been careful of draughts, and should not have dreamed of sleeping as close to a north-east window as I have had to do here, especially with so old a framework, admitting, as it does, so much air. I very much dislike sharing a room with others, and strongly objected to leaving my room, but the doctor said I must, and that I could not afford to pay for Miss Devise's room, so I had no alternative but to relinquish it."

The poor lady had a very bad attack of bronchitis, from which she had scarcely recovered when I arrived at the asylum, which was scarcely surprising, when the intense cold of the lounge and passages through which she passed was taken into consideration. She was allowed as a special privilege to sit in the dining-room when she appeared at eleven o'clock, and at first resented my occupying the room also, assuring me that the lounge was quite warm enough for me, and that if my feet were cold I could put them on the pipes. But when she found that I was always ready to perform any little service for her, and especially when the attendants discovered that I had no suicidal

tendencies, and I was allowed to toast the bread and scrape, and I never failed to toast her two of the thinnest slices I could find for her tea, even when the powers that be decreed that there could be no toast for the rest of us—for I knew that she disliked the "school-girl" bread and butter exceedingly, but that she ate and enjoyed the toast—she received me into favour, and often asked me to join her in the dining-room.

The peremptory attendant she regarded as her own property and was very much upset at her departure; but, as she confided to me, she hoped to be leaving soon herself. "The doctor tells me he cannot possibly allow me to leave until the weather is warmer, but I am sure he will not be able to detain me after June; it will then be quite warm. I should like to go to Bournemouth, or to some seaside place, for I feel I need a warm climate, and I am so anxious to be my own mistress again. My brother is most anxious I should go to stay with him, but the doctor has told him I must not think of a move until the warm weather sets in, but then I mean to go, whether the doctor allows it or not."

One or two circumstances led to Miss Hares being very excited. One day, just before the peremptory attendant left, I heard the matron speaking very angrily and loudly to her in the dining-room. Miss Hares had frequent severe attacks of indigestion, which affected the action of her heart, and she

frequently panted for breath for some half-hour during the night. This she attributed to her supper, and with reason. She had all her life dined late, now she had to eat bread and cheese supper at seven p.m., with which she took a glass of stout, the most unsuitable diet possible for an elderly woman suffering from bronchial and heart trouble. However, since Miss Hares' last illness a concession had been made in her favour, and she was allowed to have an egg for supper, at least when there was one, which was perhaps three times a week. When the egg failed to appear, Miss Hares lost her temper, which she did on very little provocation, it must be admitted, and she spoke her mind freely. However, only the attendant was present, and she generally turned a deaf ear, or told Miss Hares to "shut up." The egg had failed to appear on several successive evenings in one week, to Miss Hares' intense disgust. She expressed her disapproval in unmeasured terms, but the attendant bade her complain in the right quarter.

"I don't lay nor buy the eggs," she said. "Grumble at them as does, if you like, but you ain't going to give it to me."

Accordingly, Miss Hares bottled up her wrath until the next day, but she had no opportunity, until just before supper, of speaking to the matron, who throughout the day had avoided the storm, judging from Miss Hares' manner that one was brewing. But the matron was most unwillingly, yet fairly,

cornered before supper, and had to listen whilst the patient poured forth the vials of her wrath. In vain the matron shouted her loudest in the futile effort to stem the flow of Miss Hares' indignant eloquence. "I will write to my brother," said the irate lady. "He imagines that I have good food and every comfort here. I have never made my evening meal of bread and cheese in my life before, and it makes me ill. I pay for eggs, and my brother shall know I do not get them." During this tirade, the matron had shouted, "If we 'aven't got any eggs, 'ow can we give them to you, you bad-tempered old woman? You have them when there are any. What more can you want?" But Miss Hares had never in her life allowed any one to interrupt her, and she had no notion of beginning now, or of being brow-beaten by the matron.

"You won't write to your brother," shouted the matron.

"My brother will come and fetch me away when I write to him, as I mean to do," continued Miss Hares.

"You shall *not* write," shouted the matron angrily.

"There are plenty of eggs to be got in the villages near this," Miss Hares went on. "Why can you not send for some, if the doctor's fowls don't lay? I will *not* eat bread and cheese for my supper; I *will have* the eggs I was promised! I do not care for

bread and butter even when it is properly cut, but these huge schoolboy pieces disgust me."

"You shan't write to your brother," reiterated the matron, as she went angrily out of the room, leaving Miss Hares still pouring forth a flood of angry and excited sentences, which ceased only after she had been left alone for some five minutes. Of course, the matron could easily have stopped Miss Hares' letter, as every one written was sent into the doctor's house for his inspection before being posted, but she took another method of preventing Miss Hares from writing.

After supper that night I was in the dining-room, and the matron came in with a tumbler. She unlocked a cupboard and took out a bottle of cheap brandy, and rather more than half-filled the tumbler.

"Was Miss Hares quiet at supper-time, and did she seem satisfied with her egg?" she inquired of me. I replied that she did not grumble, and was very quiet.

"This will please her, and put her in a good temper," she said, holding up the glass.

"But you, surely, will not give her all that?" I asked.

"O! that won't hurt her, and she likes it," replied the matron.

"Well," I said, "I am a life abstainer, but I am not a rabid teetotaller, and a very small quantity of the best brandy may not hurt Miss Hares if she had

taken no other stimulants, but she has had a glass and a half of stout to-night, and all that brandy will surely be very bad for her."

"O! it will keep her quiet, and she will enjoy it," said the matron. "I must give her something to make up for going without the egg."

Needless to say that Miss Hares paid for the bad and cheap brandy, as she did for all the stimulants she took, therefore I was at a loss to see how the matron could be *giving* her an equivalent for the eggs, and I watched with some interest the effect of the stimulant on the patient. It certainly did not quiet her; it excited her, as probably the matron intended it should. Instead of lying quietly in her bed, as she was accustomed to do, Miss Hares got up to lower the gas, which she declared was so high it prevented her from sleeping, then she went into the various cubicles, coming no fewer than nine times into mine. Each time she bent over me her big dark eyes glaring into my face, for I was in bed, and each time she declared that Miss C——, a most meek and inoffensive person, was, in her opinion, a very deceitful, untrustworthy individual. Presently the nurse came up, and to her surprise the patient was still undressed, and wandering about the room.

"Come," she said, "get into bed; the gas will be lowered when I am undressed; hurry up."

But she had no idea of hurrying; instead, she went into the nurse's cubicle and began talking with her

usual volubility, now much greater since she was excited by the unusual dose of brandy. The attendant at last got her to go into her cubicle, and tucked her up in bed, and for quarter of an hour all was quiet, and the attendant dropping off to sleep, when Miss Hares suddenly got out of bed and entered the attendant's cubicle. Now, she had entered those of each of the three patients, disturbing their slumbers, of course, but that was a matter of too slight an importance to be noticed by the staff, but an attendant's slumber came under quite another category. Springing out of bed, and donning slippers and a dressing-gown, the attendant left the room like a whirlwind, leaving the lady staring motionless in the direction where she had disappeared.

In a few minutes she returned, accompanied by three others, who, laughing and joking, began to possess themselves of Miss Hares' bedding and clothing. Recovering her speech, the latter dashed forward to prevent her bed from being stripped.

"What are you doing? Leave my bed alone," she screamed.

"Doctor's orders," shouted the attendants, who were hugely enjoying the poor lady's distress.

"You'll have to come down to the observation room, and stay there for a bit; you can't be disturbing a nurse, at this time of the night."

Whether the words "Doctor's orders" conveyed some special meaning to Miss Hares, I do not know.

Of course the doctor had given no such orders; he was sleeping in his bed, and would certainly not have left it, or have been disturbed in it, on account of so insignificant a patient, as a mere inmate of his asylum. Anyhow Miss Hares surprised us all by—perhaps from sheer astonishment at the proceedings, perhaps from fear of the doctor's displeasure—meekly and silently following her bedding, and the cubicle room knew her no more during the time I occupied it.

She kept her bed for at least ten days, and it was a very subdued and quiet Miss Hares who returned to us at the end of that time. She looked ghastly pale and was evidently ill. She had been quite unable to attend to her correspondence during her retirement; in fact the matron had written to her brother, acquainting him with his sister's indisposition, for which act of kindness Miss Hares had expressed becoming gratitude. The matron, however, had kept her word, and carried out her threat and the patient had not written to her brother to complain, as she had every right to do. She got stronger in time, but was never as well during my sojourn as before the brandy incident; and if she had spent fifteen days in the observation room I could quite understand her being ill. She did not return to the cubicle room during my sojourn in the "Temple." Miss Pratt, as I have said, was placed there, and later poor Miss Needes, whose physical health broke down, was placed in it by day.

Poor Miss Hares! She was so anxious to leave the asylum, and when release came it was in every sense of the word a "happy" one, although not in the sense she had anticipated; for I learned some time later that she had remained throughout the summer in the asylum, that she grew daily weaker and weaker, and that when the autumn came she passed away with the falling leaves, to a happier world, for there will, let us hope, be no need for lunatic asylums in the life to come.

CHAPTER XVI

LEAVING THE ASYLUM

At the beginning of my sixteenth week of detention, I tried, as the Superintendent passed through the lounge on his usual morning visit, to speak to him, but he pointedly avoided me. Mrs. Edge remarked this, and after he had passed out of the room said :

"He won't have nothing to say to you ; you'll never get away now ; you've offended 'im. You should be quiet as I am ; I don't bother no one to take me 'ome."

"You are altogether different from me," I replied. "You have a husband, who you know will fetch you away the moment the doctor tells him he may do so. I have sisters only, and they do their utmost to keep me here, although I tell them how badly I need medical advice. My getting away depends upon myself wholly and solely, and I mean to accomplish it."

I was thoroughly annoyed that the doctor had refused to speak to me, and I determined there and then to carry out a plan which I had conceived some time before.

Seeing the matron pass through the lounge, I approached her and said: "I tried to speak to the doctor this morning, but he would not allow me to say a word. Can I write to him what I wished to say?"

"Yes," she replied hesitatingly, "I suppose you can."

I very quickly procured writing materials and indited the following note—

"Dear Dr. —,

"I endeavoured to speak to you this morning, but you could not attend to me, so I am obliged to trouble you with this note, which I hope you will excuse.

"I have, from the commencement of my detention here, repeatedly assured you that I am not in a position to pay your fees, and as my sisters do not take advantage of your offer to discharge me, which you made them weeks ago, I must insist—if a residence in an asylum is necessary—on at once being removed to a county asylum, and as I am quite ignorant how I am to proceed in this matter, I must ask you to give me the necessary instructions.

"Yours very truly,

"MARCIA HAMILCAR."

A quarter of an hour later the Superintendent came into the lounge like a whirlwind, armed with an official envelope addressed to the Commissioners.

Throwing it down on the table near me, he exclaimed angrily, and in his most jerky style, "Write yourself to the Commissioners, and make your own arrangements. I have already told your sisters to remove you, for I will not keep you here."

"May I ask why you refuse to keep me here?" I asked calmly.

"Because you worry so," he replied over his shoulder as he dashed through the conservatory into his own quarters.

After some consideration I decided that I would not ask the Commissioners to remove me to the County Asylum, but request them to discharge me, and if they refused this, then I would ask to be removed, as I knew I should have no difficulty in proving my sanity to the satisfaction of any unprejudiced person.

I awaited with what patience I could muster their reply, Mrs. Edge applying meanwhile her accustomed douches of cold water; the other patients in the convalescent ward took the greatest interest in my attempts to regain my liberty, which provided them with quite an unusual and most welcome excitement and a providential subject for conversation.

At length, on the third day after the dispatch of my letter to the Commissioners, I received a short, but very welcome, letter informing me that I should shortly receive my discharge.

As soon as the Superintendent made his appearance I showed him the letter. He repeated that he had

written to my sisters, and that I could leave as soon as they fixed a date. I also wrote to them saying how rejoiced I was that I had succeeded in obtaining my discharge in spite of their efforts to prevent me. I should have left that same day, had I not been homeless and moneyless. The matron, however, told me that my sisters had found rooms for me, and that I could make no arrangements myself, but that in a few days I should know where I was to go; meanwhile I must wait.

And now that it was definitely settled that I should leave, I had many misgivings as to facing the world again; but my greatest anxiety was my cropped head. I dreaded meeting any one, friends or strangers, disfigured as I was, and so keenly did I feel this, that if I had been rich and had had the money to do so, I really think that sometimes I should have felt inclined to stay in the asylum until my hair had grown. I was really sorry, too, to leave many of the patients, especially Miss Needes and Mrs. Edge, to whom I felt I had been of real service.

Every post I expected a letter from my sisters, but none came, and where or with whom I should find a home exercised my mind not a little. My sisters were at this time assuring all our relatives and friends that I should make my home with them, but strangely enough they said not a word to me on the subject. On the Monday of the seventeenth week the matron said to me, "You can pack this morning, Miss

Hamilcar, your sisters will be 'ere to remove you this afternoon."

So I joyfully, yet not without regret that I must go forth alone, and leave those patients in whom I was interested in durance vile, gathered my possessions together, and made my few arrangements, which were complete long before the mid-day dinner. And then commenced another weary waiting.

The long hours passed by, but no one came for me, no message, no letter, did my kind relatives consider it necessary to send me in explanation of their failure to appear. The next day passed in the same way, and no inquiries could elicit a reason for such extraordinary conduct. "Am I ever to leave this place?" I asked myself again and again during those weary hours.

Then on Wednesday morning a letter reached me from my sisters. It offered no explanation for the long waiting. My sister calmly informed me that as I had been so very dissatisfied with the "Home" and the asylum, both of which they had chosen for me, they declined to have anything further to do with selecting another, and I was free to go where I chose. Not a word was said on the subject of my going to them. My sister added that if the doctor would allow one of the nurses to accompany me in my search for rooms or a boarding-house, she would bear the expense, and there the letter ended.

As all the staff was fully employed with fresh cases

that had lately come in, and no nurse could be spared, I set out alone to the nearest village, and although walking was painful from the swollen state of my limbs I never enjoyed a walk more. To be free, and to go out alone without the presence of those dreadful attendants was joy indeed. To be again in God's beautiful world, a responsible being, how good it was! And how intensely I appreciated my liberty, only those who have been deprived of it for even a short period can form any idea.

I succeeded in finding two rooms in a clean and pretty cottage smothered in roses and clematis. It was the first week of June, and a beautiful summer. It seemed to me that Nature rejoiced with me in my recovered freedom.

I could not, however, have the rooms before the following Saturday, and then for only a month. This suited me very well, as it gave me time to get medical advice.

I returned to the asylum delighted with my taste of freedom, and I can imagine that my face had changed in expression, as had those of other patients, who had gone, for the characteristic expression on those who are in asylums is hopelessness.

"I do not recognize you," said one of the patients; "your face is radiant, you are another being."

And yet how little I had to make me glad! My cherished home gone; all I had worked for during forty years gone too; my health ruined, and last, but

not least, poverty staring me in the face ! Yet the recovery of my liberty and of my place in the world sufficed to effect such a change that I was scarcely recognisable !

Thursday and Friday seemed to me very long days. I devoted them entirely to the patients, and we sat for the greater part of the long early June days in the garden.

Mrs. Edge had a surprise during those two long days. On the first an attendant told her her husband had come to see her. She returned in half-an-hour to dress for a drive—her husband had a carriage—and she expected to be out until the evening. How she would enjoy those six hours of unrestrained liberty, the first she had tasted for eighteen long, weary months ! Poor woman ! Her tears fell fast as she dressed with trembling fingers. “He’s goin’ to get me out if he can ; ’e says ’e’ll do his very best and work it as quick as Miss Pratt’s nephew did. I told ’im ’e had no business to send me ’ere, but he says ’e couldn’t ’elp it, ’twas all they doctor’s fault, curse ’em !”

In the evening a transformed Mrs. Edge made her appearance at supper-time. As I looked at her I was struck for the first time with the fact that she must before her illness have been a very comely matron. But the light soon left her eyes when she had been seated in her accustomed place a few minutes, and the hopeless expression returned, and with it a doubt

of her husband's ability to get her away. She trembled with hope, but the rough usage of so many months had cut so deep, she dared not look forward to anything so entrancing as a return to her home and family. She, too, dreaded to return to her old world again.

"But my 'usband says I mustn't mind that," she said, as we all stood outside the lounge door, before going to our beds at 8-30. "'E was talkin' to a gentleman 'e knows, who asked for me, and promised to send his carriage for me when I got back to take me for drives; but my poor children will never think the same of me again. I often think I'd as soon stay here as go back. Bein' in a place like this, and going through what I have, takes all the relish out of one's life. Sometimes I think I'd a hundred times rather die than go 'ome."

But we cheered her up, and although her pessimism prevented her from seeing anything but the darkest side, even of leaving the asylum, for bringing her to which she never ceased to blame her husband and the doctors, yet that one half-day's foretaste of liberty had left her a different woman, and it was another Mrs. Edge I left on the Saturday following. I heard some time after I had left that her husband redeemed his promise, and that she also quitted the asylum soon after I did, and, I hope, never again to enter that or any similar establishment.

I rose on the Saturday morning, and did not make

my usual remark to the attendant when she brought the hot water, viz., "Another dreadful day," for this was a joyful day, for which I had been working and striving ever since I entered the doors of my living grave. I was to return to the living again, to be free! How I enjoyed for the first time since I entered those walls the brilliant June sun, the song of the birds, the colours of the flowers, all the sights and sounds of spring, that all my life I had so loved until this year, when they seemed to mock me.

I was not to leave until after the four o'clock tea, and I spent the day in the garden, as I had the preceding ones, and in going into the other wards to wish those of the patients I knew good-bye.

Before I left I asked to see the Superintendent, who had been very kind in the matter of my leaving. My sisters, in their letter of Wednesday morning, told me to leave immediately on receiving their letter, as the doctor had informed them he required my bed for another patient. Of course, it never occurred to my sisters that I had made no arrangements to leave, or that I could not perhaps find a lodging in an hour, although they knew that I was miles from a town. The doctor, however, told me to suit my own convenience as to the date of my departure, and knowing that I was without money had offered to furnish me with funds, which offer I must have accepted had I not received a cheque that morning.

I wished to thank the doctor for having given me

a comfortable bed, in a quiet room, and for allowing me to occupy it, throughout the period of my detention. The attendants and most of the patients changed their beds and rooms constantly; indeed, they never seemed to know one night where they would sleep the next.

So after tea I went through the conservatory into the doctor's house, and waited in the hall until he appeared. After I had thanked him he remarked, "You leave this house as competent to take your place in the world as at any time in your life."

"Without a stain on my character," I replied, "as the judge remarks when he acquits an innocent person. But I have this slight disadvantage over that innocent person, that in coming here I have lost my home, my health, everything I prized in life, and I am reduced to poverty. I must earn my bread, but I have, in coming here, lost the means of doing so."

I suppose the doctor imagined I was romancing, for he took no notice of my remark, but with the inconsistency that characterizes the treatment of the insane by the medical profession and the attendants, and in direct contradiction of his former statement, he remarked as he shook hands—

"But you are not recovered, you know; you are only better than when you came here."

And I found some months later, to my great surprise, that I had been discharged "Relieved," not recovered! Yet I was allowed to leave

the asylum alone, to go alone to rooms, to occupy them alone, nor did I see either of my sisters until fifteen months after. But I lived among strangers, and the sane, as a sane person, nor did the people with whom I at first or subsequently lodged imagine that I had ever been detained in an asylum, for nothing in my manner, actions or mode of living or thought was in the slightest degree abnormal, yet *I* was, and still am, I presume, out of the asylum only on "relief!" Surely the ways of doctors in their treatment of the insane are past finding out!

I met the assistant doctor as I turned to leave the doctor's house. His face expressed bewildered astonishment.

"What a change!" he exclaimed. "I cannot think it possible you are the same person who came in here four months ago."

"Because then I had been starved, drugged and ill-used," I replied. "I certainly was not myself, although I was mentally as sound as you are. I am, now that I am free, beginning to feel, and, I suppose, to look, like my old self."

"Keep up your strength, and don't starve yourself," was his parting injunction.

"I have never starved myself, but I have been starved," I replied.

Leaving the doctor's house, I went to a cottage near at hand and arranged with a labourer, who was the

proud possessor of a pony and cart, to convey my luggage to the rooms I had taken, and at five o'clock on a brilliant June day, after many good-byes, the patients' entrance was unlocked, and I, a lonely figure, passed out into a lonely world. The patients gathered with the attendants and watched me, waving hands and handkerchiefs, as I climbed the hill that rose above the doctor's house. Soon I was lost to view, and, turning round, waved for the last time; then as I proceeded on my way, the hill blotted out the picture that will always remain fixed in my memory.

How different was my return to the world and Miss P——'s! She returned to her old home. I had lost mine. She was fetched by loving relatives, who gave her a hearty welcome back to the world. But no hand was extended to meet mine, no loved or well-known voice greeted me as I left the bolts and bars of the asylum behind me. I went alone, a homeless wanderer, sick and ill, to find a resting-place among strangers, who, however, were far kinder to me than my own people!

CHAPTER XVII.

ASYLUM FOOD AND SANITATION.

If the insane person ranks socially below the criminal, and has no right to be treated as a human being, he has naturally no right to be fed with anything but the worst of food, although he may pay for the best of everything.

Where I was detained, the quantity and quality of the food supplied may be gauged when I state that a young girl who had entered the Superintendent's service as housemaid, assisted by another girl about fifteen years old, did the entire cooking and carving for, on an average, seventy people. It is not surprising, therefore, that the food was bad, and coarse in quality, and often horribly cooked.

For instance, take the lentil soup as an example, which was served at dinner on two days in the week. This consisted of chunks of barely cooked turnips and other vegetables, a small portion of brown liquid, and, at the bottom, hard unappetizing lentils in exactly the same state in which they had come from the grocer. The second course of the repast on those days consisted of cold salted meat, and no sweets or

puddings were allowed. Another day the mid-day meal consisted of stewed rabbit, very badly prepared, followed by the very worst form of suet pudding that can be imagined. Another pudding that appeared at regular intervals was equally disgusting. It was perfectly black, and to guess at any of its ingredients, save the overpowering common spice used probably to disguise unpleasant flavours, was impossible.

The invalids were sometimes given a mince made from the salt meat moistened with the water in which the meat had been cooked, and served cold : a horrible dish indeed. Rice puddings, cornflour, and blanc-mange, the latter of which appeared on Sunday only, made up the list of puddings.

Vegetables such as cabbage were not given more often than twice a week, and then in only small quantities. Fruit, raw or cooked, was not included in the dietary, but on two occasions during my seventeen weeks' detention a dessert of oranges, apples, and bananas was provided, one of either being allowed each patient.

A hot joint on Sundays, greasy and badly cooked, and mutton one day in the week, with the penitential Friday herring made up the week's dinners.

For tea we were allowed the cheapest jam or marmalade twice a week, and cakes on Sundays. These latter were made of the coarsest and darkest flour, to which a small quantity of stale dripping was added, and in case they should prove too rich for

digestions unaccustomed to luxuries the sugar was omitted. They were baked on the Wednesday of each week, and were by Sunday as hard as boards, yet Miss Blanke and Miss Hares often scrambled like two schoolboys for more than their allotted share.

In these days nothing could be more insanitary than many arrangements in the house. Whether public institutions are better equipped in this respect I cannot say from experience. The bath-rooms were disgraceful, and although the convalescent patients were allowed the privilege of using the bath alone, the others were often pushed four at a time into the bath-room. There was a great scarcity of towels, and the weekly half-yard of huck-a-back placed in the bedrooms was quite insufficient for the purposes it had to fill.

All the passages in the part of the house I saw were used as bedrooms, and nothing gave the attendant Stiles greater pleasure than keeping the patients outside the passage room she occupied until she felt inclined to let them pass through to their own rooms.

There were never sufficient tumblers or basins, and sometimes four patients had to use one of the former. Two medicine glasses sufficed for three wards. These were rarely washed, and generally mislaid when wanted. I have seen a housemaid pour out as much or as little as she deemed necessary, and hand it to a "nurse," for the utmost laxity prevailed with the regard to the amount of the doses and the intervals of time between them.

The "feed" for the unfortunate patients who were fed through tubes was kept when prepared within a foot of a lavatory used by at least twenty five persons. The milk for daily use was also kept on the same shelf. Bread and butter for the chronics' tea was cut immediately after dinner to suit the nurses' convenience. As these wards were not provided with pantries, the nurses placed the plates on a bed in a room where several invalids, one suffering from a dreadful form of skin disease, spent the day and night.

The garden used by the chronic cases would certainly have been condemned had it been visited by any inspector of health, owing to the various bad odours which could always be detected there. The chronics were compelled to go into this garden, whatever the state of the weather, for several hours daily. There they walked about or sat on the seats, but were as a rule forbidden by the attendants to enjoy the shelter of a stone summer-house, because the former objected to their conversation being overheard.

The patient who came from the same part of the country as myself, assured me that when in the lower ward she had besought the attendant to allow her to remain indoors during the prevalence of a three days' heavy fog, but in vain. The result was a dangerous attack of bronchitis, which nearly cost her her life, and left her with a dreadful cough, which kept everyone in her neighbourhood awake all night.

These are only a few instances of the glaring defects in the management of the asylum where I was, and yet I have since been assured by people—who, however, have never been inside its doors—that this institution is in every way superior to hundreds of others.

When I first saw the bad and chronic cases, I was struck with the extreme flabbiness of their flesh, and the colour in particular of their hands.

One day a patient strayed from the No. 2 garden into ours, attracted by some flowers. She was soon found by an attendant, who stood behind her, put her hands on the patient's shoulders, and thus compelled her to run down the steep bank. As the patient did so her flabby cheeks literally swayed to and fro in a most extraordinary manner.

The greater number of the patients' hands were a livid purple, my own included, much to my dismay, but those of one of the chronics were a bright vermilion. When I pressed the flesh of my hands it assumed a death-like, ghastly hue; but they resumed their natural colour as soon as I left the asylum. Possibly the want of exercise and the sedentary, monotonous life was the cause.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REMEDIAL MEASURES IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE IN OUR OWN.

To suggest remedies for the evils presented to the reader is the obvious duty of the reformer, and having recourse to Mr. Beers' Autobiography—and I could have no better guide—I shall quote at length from "A Mind that Found Itself."

Very pertinently Mr. Beers asks, "Is there in the problem of managing and treating the insane an inherent difficulty which will for ever prevent the correction of such abuses and deficiencies as have been discussed in this book? If not, how may the individual assume part of the burden which, in the telling of my story, has been shifted to the shoulders of the many?"

"An emphatic answer to the first question may be given. *No inherent difficulty* stands in the way of the universal correction of all abuses and deficiencies of treatment complained of in this book—unless it be the inherent apathy of a Public which for centuries has failed to do its duty by the insane.

"For bringing about the reforms which of necessity must precede any such correction of century-old

abuses, the interest of every right-thinking person in this country must be enlisted. Every man and woman must lend a hand. The subject has for generations been utterly neglected; its discussion will create and mould Public Opinion, and Public Opinion vigorously expressed will, more than any other factor, tend to correct the evils I have denounced. Has my story failed of its purpose? If it has stirred your sympathy, it is your duty to give expression to this aroused interest, not to *me*, but to everybody within your sphere of influence. Continual and sincere expression will wear away that rock of indifference against which distressed souls and abused bodies of the insane have been bruised for centuries. Has my story—not as the story of *my* life, but as representing the experience of thousands of others still living, and of thousands whose terrible secrets died with them—has this story, I say, aroused within you the healthy desire to contribute at least your influence to the corrective and overwhelming force of Public Opinion? If so, your duty is plain.

“Individual assistance may be given in an easy way. Let each convinced reader of this book be prepared to send his or her name and address to whatever Society, Association, League or Committee may be organized when the necessity for the existence of one or all of these has been brought home to the public. These names, in the aggregate, will form a mighty petition, the force of which no State official

or Committee of Investigation will care or dare to ignore. Thus for the first time in history, legislators throughout the land will have impressed upon them the fact that the public desires hospital managements to have support—such support as will enable them to discharge their obligations to the public—and discharge them in a manner that will bring credit, not disgrace, to a nation distinguished for its love of fair play.

“A permanent agency for reform and education in the field of nervous and mental diseases is one of the great needs of the day. Such an agency—whatever its form—could do in its own field what the National Society (U.S.A.) for the Prevention and Cure of Consumption has done, and is doing, in its sphere of activity. Though the improvement of conditions among those actually insane and confined should ever be an important factor in shaping the policy of such an organization, its most important work would be the waging of an educative war against the prevailing ignorance regarding insanity. To cure the disease by preventing it is the only effective cure known. . . . A campaign of education, rigorously carried on, would, in time, lead to the rescue of thousands who, if left in ignorance, must, of necessity, drift into a state of actual and perhaps incurable insanity. Editors, ministers, educators, philanthropists and members of the medical profession could do much to further such a work of enlightenment.”

Before suggesting a scheme of remedial measures for the British Isles, let us see if these are in advance of or lagging behind other countries in the treatment of the insane. The reader shall form his own opinion, but when the case has been fairly stated, it will be safe to assert that he will find little cause for self-laudation or self-congratulation, on his superiority on this head. We will begin with America, and again quote from Mr. Beers' Autobiography. There we shall find that on the sixth of December, 1899, seven physicians of Albany, New York, petitioned the Board of Supervisors of the County to erect a "building for the temporary care of insane patients," directing attention to the fact that, "the process of commitment to a hospital for the insane is complicated, and often requires several days, during which time the patient may be protected by his friends as best they can, or, in event of active manifestations of insanity, endangering himself or others, be placed in jail."

The petition was favourably considered, and a law was enacted appropriating eighteen thousand dollars "for the construction and furnishing of a reception pavilion in connection with the Albany Hospital, for the detention and care of persons afflicted with nervous and mental disorders." The Albany is a private corporation, under the administration of a board of governors, elected annually by subscribers, built on land granted by the city, and providing wards for the care of patients private and public,"

"The pavilion for mental cases was placed in the rear of the nurses' house, distant from the general wards, and from the publicity of the central corridor."

"The floor plan was designed with an eye to the needs of all classes of patients. It was anticipated that both turbulent and quiet cases would be received, and that the comfort of each must be considered. There were two departments, separated by a heavy partition wall and double doors, in the rear of which were two guarded rooms, where noise might be confined. At the end of the first year it was found that this provision was inadequate, and the rear section was enlarged to provide ten rooms, with a day room on each floor. Six of these rooms were approached by a communicating cross-hall, so that the disturbed patients are removed from the general ward. This plan serves the double purpose of adequate provision for the excited patient, and protection for others. . ."

"The first consideration is consequently architectural, and Pavilion F has been so constructed as to afford means of isolation, and at the same time proper personal attendance. Much of its best work has been accomplished in the treatment of acute cases of a very active character; and such cases when properly managed, afford the quickest and most satisfactory recoveries and have a legitimate claim upon the general hospital."

"The administration of Pavilion F is based upon that of the other departments, except that the attending

physician has continuous service, and is held to strict accountability to the governors of the hospital. He visits at least once a day and exercises supervision and medical power. The physicians of the community have generally co-operated with the hospital and have assisted in the management of critical cases, realizing the greater difficulties experienced before the creation of this department, and the delicate questions involved."

"The attending physician is assisted by two internes on the medical service, whose duties are the taking of histories and examination of the patients under his direction. The greatest instrument for good, however, is the nursing care."

"Some ninety nurses are under training in the hospital. The course is for three years, and includes every department. In Pavilion F at least ten weeks are required on day and night duty on the men's and women's wards. The pupil-nurses are directed and supervised by the head nurse, who is a woman of experience in mental work, co-operates with the training school, is a part of it, and is an assistant to the superintendent of nurses."

"The standard of nursing is that established by the hospital, and this in turn reflects the requirements of the most exacting patronage of the community. The service given by the nurses in the mental department has proved the most substantial factor in establishing high ideals. Nor is the pavilion under an excess of

obligation, as educational elements are supplied which count largely in the equipment of the nurse for the work in general medicine and surgery. Clinical instruction is also given to the students of the Albany Medical College, who attend a weekly bed-side course during the college year."

"From February, 1902, to February, 1907, one thousand and thirty-five patients were received in the Albany Hospital for the Insane. Of these five hundred and ninety-six returned to their homes recovered, or improved, three hundred and sixteen have remained stationary, and eighty-six have died. Two hundred and forty-five have been transferred to institutions for the insane; of these one hundred and during legal proceedings, and one hundred and twenty-six were sent to Pavilion F for detention eighteen were committed after a period of observation. It thus appears that nine hundred and five patients have been under treatment without legal process, one hundred and eighteen of whom it became necessary later to commit to institutions for the insane."

"If this special provision for the treatment of the mentally afflicted had not been made in the Albany Hospital, then these nine hundred and five patients would either have had to be improperly treated at home, or would have been committed after a probably harmful development of the disease. It is impossible to judge how many may have been saved from an unnecessary commitment."

"Every form of mental alienation or defect has been represented, and with reference to personal mental responsibility these may be divided into three groups:—

I.—Neurasthenia, hysteria, hypochondria, melancholia, mania, light grades of dementia, some forms of drug addiction and alcoholism, and physical diseases with incidental mental symptoms.

II.—Delirium or stupor, feeble-mindedness, advanced dementia, the late stages of paresis, and old age.

III.—Early paresis and delusional insanity."

It should not be forgotten that insanity is disease, and that the determination by a court of laymen of the treatment of disease is illogical, nor can the work of a hospital for the insane be done in a general hospital. But there are many forms of mental disorder having the character of an acute illness, and there are many forms of acute physical disease with disturbance of mental functions for which the general hospital should provide; otherwise it is not a general hospital."

Now, have we in the length and breadth of these islands such a building as Pavilion F attached to any of our general or mental hospitals. I do not know of one such, nor can I find one; yet its need is as great in Great Britain as in America.

The outcome of Mr. Clifford W. Beers' book, "A Mind that Found Itself," has been the establishment

of "The Connecticut Society for Mental Hygiene," the objects of which are "To work for the protection of the mental health of the public at large, and to help to raise the standard of care for those actually ill, or threatened with mental disorder." Of this Society Mr. Beers is the Executive Secretary. Among its directors are many well-known American names in the medical, legal, and other professions, and it has, although incorporated only in July, 1908, already accomplished good and lasting work for the benefit of those who, from the nature of their afflictions, cannot make the need for reform in the treatment they receive from the sane, properly known. Of the activities of this Society, the "After-Care" and "Before-Care" are the most important, and the Society works in the belief that the State will eventually assume a burden which so clearly belongs to it. In the booklet setting forth the scope of the work, it is stated that the aim of the society is to become a permanent agency for education and reform in the field of nervous and mental diseases; an agency for education always, for reform, as long as radical changes are needed.

A most important function of the Society is the waging of an educative war against the prevailing ignorance regarding conditions and modes of living which tend to produce mental disorders. This common-sense work of prevention will, in time, reduce, and thus bring under control, the now increasing population of our hospitals and asylums.

The Society publishes and distributes information which will warn and help rescue those threatened with nervous or mental collapse, and indicates the help at hand. Popular articles on mental disorders and the provisions for their management, written especially for the general public, will go far towards correcting mistaken ideas commonly held by laymen; and such knowledge, widely spread, will overcome many terrors now ignorantly associated with mental disturbances and the institutions provided for their treatment.

The Society endeavours to spread a knowledge of the principle of Non-Restraint, with a view to bringing about the universal adoption of this individualizing principle in the treatment of insanity.

Men and women, suited to the work, are delegated by the Society to visit asylums and take an interest in friendless patients. It is assumed that physicians will co-operate in this work.

One aim of the Society is to secure legislation which will provide for effective supervision of private institutions wherein nervous or mental diseases are treated.

The Society appoints After-Care Committees to assist those who, without help of some kind at the time of their discharge, might find the struggle for existence so severe as to cause a relapse.

The Society shall be represented in every town and city by a committee which shall act as First-Aid to

the insane and to their relatives and friends. Statutes shall be framed concerning attendants to ensure efficiency in these and the vicious should be eliminated from the ranks of asylum workers.

Influence shall be exerted to have courses of Psychiatry established wherever there is a medical college.

Does such a Society exist in these isles? I can find no trace of it, if it does; yet the need is as great in our islands as in the United States.

That country then is far in advance of us not only in its hospitals or asylums for the insane, but in its private organizations for the benefit of those helpless beings, the mentally afflicted, for whose protection from man's naturally brutal instincts not one society exists at present in Britain, although for the protection of the lower creation, for vermin, etc., their name is legion.

Now, let us turn our attention first among the continental countries to our commercial and naval rival, Germany, who, by her thoroughness, industry, business methods, and the system she brings to bear on every department of science, art, commerce and education, etc., is wresting, surely if slowly, from us our boasted supremacy. That she is, and has been for years, ahead of us in her treatment of insanity goes without saying.

Referring again to Mr. Beers' book, I find in Appendix II. an article by Hon. Frank H. Mason,

written May, 1905, when he was U.S. Consul-General at Berlin. It is entitled "A Modern Hospital for the Insane," and it says :—"Among the valuable lessons which most other nations can advantageously learn from the experience and practice of Germany is the scientific treatment of insanity in its incipient stages, as a physical and possibly curable disease.

"Notwithstanding the rapid and deplorable increase of mental diseases which has followed the stress and strain of modern business and social life it must be admitted that the United States and in Great Britain, governmental beneficence has not progressed beyond the eleemosynary function of providing asylums in which the more or less hopelessly incurable victims of insanity, who have become a burden or menace to their friends, can drag out in safety and physical comfort the remnant of their stricken lives. If here and there a private clinic has made a hopeful beginning with the pathological treatment of mental diseases, it has been due to individual initiative, and the ministrations of such institutions are restricted mainly to patients of the well-to-do class, leaving the great majority of poor unfortunates to drift on to a stage of mental alienation in which they become dangerous to themselves and to those about them, and therefore entitled to the attention and support of the State. Germany has taken a long and important step beyond this, for there are twenty-two psychiatrical hospitals for the treatment of mental diseases ; of these

Kiel, Giessen, Strassbourg and Berlin are worthy of study, but the new clinic of Munich stands undoubtedly at the head of all institutions of its class in this or any other country. It was built by the City of Munich at a cost of \$500,000." Here are some of its advantages.

"It is conveniently situated and accessible; it is in close touch with the medical department of a leading university, and it has for a field of usefulness a city of 580,000 people. It has accommodation for 110 bed patients of both sexes, besides a large dispensary on the ground floor for the treatment of voluntary patients who come in at stated periods but live otherwise at home. Although opened only a few months ago, the clinic will have treated not fewer than 2,000 patients before the close of its first year."

"The edifice includes the central and administration building, with two wings, which form the front and sides of an open court or garden. In the central structure are located laboratories for pathological, chemical, and psychological studies, a fine medical library, rooms for the reception and examination of patients, and the private rooms of the director. The apparatus and facilities for every form of research connected with any question relating to *preventing*, detecting, and curing insanity are as elaborate and perfect as experience and up-to-date science can suggest."

"Among various special features are bath-rooms, arranged with tubs in which the water can be maintained indefinitely at a given temperature, and in which excited patients may be kept without restraint for hours, to splash at will, or even to sleep, using rubber air cushions as pillows—a soothing and highly efficacious form of treatment at certain stages of mental disease. (What a contrast to the bare, icy cell into which I—a practically dying woman—was thrown on my first night in an English asylum!) A small iron door opens into an oven in which hot towels are always ready to be used in rubbing down the patient on leaving the bath."

"A ward of the ordinary size contains space for from five to ten beds and has among its equipment a small electric cooking stove for boiling eggs and heating milk or water, a movable bath tub on castors, and electric lights that can be so controlled as to give any desired degree of illumination."

The lecture-room has accommodation for 240 students, and if, during the day, the lecturer wishes to use kinetoscope or magic lantern illustrations, he touches a button and black shades running in grooves at each window drop and make the interior dark. Another knob is touched and the kinetoscope or picture is thrown on the screen, and the lecture proceeds without a moment's interruption.

"The hospital is not free. Patients are divided according to their means into three classes, but the

treatment and medical services are the same to all. All the wards are perfectly warmed, ventilated and lighted. *Absolutely no restraint is used.* The medical staff consists of Germany's foremost specialists in mental diseases. These and two assistant physicians are paid, but young physicians receive for their services board and lodging only. The educational advantages are this clinic's most valuable asset. These include oral and clinical instruction not only to medical students, but to *practising physicians*. The clinic serves also as a tribunal of highest authority to determine the conduct of patients who are involved in litigation which hinge on the fact or degree of mental aberration. Such a patient is kept under expert observation and subjected to tests that finally give a definite diagnosis of his condition, which is not left to be decided by the academic opinion of a mental expert, caught by the artful hypothetical questions of a shrewd opposing attorney.

"Thus constructed, equipped and administered the modern psychiatrial clinic in Germany meets and fulfils two fundamental needs that exist in every city in the United States and in almost every city in Europe, viz., that of better facilities for the skilful treatment, care and possible cure of cases of incipient and acute insanity; and in the investigation of practical problems upon the solution of which must depend the arrest of increasing insanity among the people of the community. Its inestimable service to

the country is that it saves an indefinite, but considerable percentage of the victims of incipient mental disease and restores them to lives of usefulness instead of leaving them to degenerate into a menace to society and a burden to the State. It provides the most consummate examination and treatment at a stage of the disease when there is the most chance of averting or arresting an attack of real insanity. It detects and takes timely charge of the smaller but important class of patients, who, without the knowledge of their friends, are on the border line of insanity, and liable at any time to become suddenly dangerous to themselves and others."

Can London point to such an institution? To its everlasting shame its best hospital for the insane is at least one hundred years behind the Munich clinic, so well described by Mr. Mason. May the greatest city in the world awake to its responsibilities and hasten to make up for past neglect by providing its millions with an institution worthy of its vaunted greatness!

A well-known specialist in America, Dr. Stewart Paton, of John Hopkins' University, has drawn up the following essential conditions and requirements of a modern hospital for the insane:—

I. Ease of access. The institution should be near to, or within the limits of a city.

II. A limited capacity, in order that every individual may be made the subject of special study.

III. Perfect construction, equipment, and organization, in order that a thorough and energetic treatment can be undertaken for all patients for whom there is hope of recovery.

IV. A relatively large staff of physicians and nurses.

V. Ample provision not only for the teaching of students, but also for the prosecution of post-graduate investigation and research in clinical psychiatry, psychopathology, and in anatomy and pathology of the nervous system.

VI. The ready admission of patients and their prompt transference, when necessary, to other more appropriate institutions and provisions for outdoor and voluntary patients.

These conditions are neither Utopian nor ideal; they are absolutely essential. Yet if an inspection of our asylums, public and private, were made in this year of grace, 1910, not one would be found to reach this standard, which is surpassed by the Munich clinic.

Germany, with her usual foresight and thoroughness, discovered long ago that a preventive and curative system in the treatment of mental diseases, if costly, was the most economical. When will the English people arrive at the same conclusion? Must the yearly sacrifice of health, the joy of life, aye, of life itself, still go on, as it has done these twenty centuries past? Will nothing rouse the sane from their apathy concerning the insane?

If we look at every great or small country of Europe, such as Belgium for instance, we find that the conditions of life of the insane compare favourably with those prevailing in the British Isles, and yet we claim to be the foremost in the world in the cause of humanity, justice, philanthropy, not to mention Christianity. We certainly show none of these attributes in the treatment of our insane, who have been for centuries tormented—not healed—by the sane, and the heathen of many countries shame the Christians in this respect, if not in many others.

Having shown the necessity for reform, we must now consider the directions in which reform should proceed. This may be summed up in two words, viz., in Every Direction.

The reforms, however, that strike one who has experienced the need for them are primarily the removal of many of the unnecessary, irksome and unjust disabilities under which lunatics now suffer. Why should the sufferer from mental disease be legally dead, and therefore unable to obtain redress for neglect, assaults, and ill-treatment, which would be punished, as it deserves, in the case of the sane? Why should the sufferer from mental diseases be classed below criminals in the social scale? When the old-age pensions became law, the various classes of the community ineligible for them were officially announced, and the list *ended* with criminals and

lunatics ; therefore, in the eyes of the law, all sufferers from mental diseases rank—yet the fault is not their own, as in the case of criminals—below the very dregs of society. What justice is there in this ? At present the lunatic is an outlaw, a pariah, an outcast, lower than the most brutal of murderers. Surely, here is need for reform !

Another sore need of the insane is some court of appeal to whom, in the case of ill-treatment, a sufferer may openly state his case, and where, when full investigation has been made, the offenders should receive a just punishment. The evidence of patients should be taken in this court, for, as Mr. Beers truly says, “Aside from delusions, there is, I am sure, not a less degree of truth spoken among a given number of insane persons than among a like number of sane persons indiscriminately selected. The insane, as a class, are the most outspoken speakers of the truth to be found anywhere, in that respect rivalling the proverbial child. Freed from the restraining conventions of polite society, if they have an opinion to offer, they rid themselves of it without reserve. And it is this very freedom of expression which puts the statement of the average insane person on a par with the reserved, self-interested and frequently biassed statements of the average sane member of society at large. I argue with one thought in mind that the inmates of an asylum are, on the whole, as well qualified to tell the truth regarding its abuses as the inhabitants of

the sane world are to describe abuses in their respective spheres of activity."

Since the law takes possession of the insane, the law should see that they are well-treated, and in the case of private patients that these get full value for their money. It should also appoint a commission to investigate the conditions of life and the treatment of patients in public and private asylums; and the patients should give their evidence in the presence of the commission only, doctors and attendants being rigidly excluded.

Private and County asylums should be placed under a rigid system of inspection. *Bonâ-fide* surprise visits should be paid at all hours of the day and *night* by inspectors specially chosen for the office. Some of these to be women.

Restraint in all forms should be abolished, and with it would depart the ignorant notion that a sufferer from mental disease must be caged, like a beast of prey, behind bolts and bars. He is not a prisoner, and ought not to be treated as one. If restraint were abolished, cruelty and ill-treatment would depart with it. Locks and bars protect not the helpless creatures confined behind them, but their keepers, who are incited to abuse the helpless, by the sense of security these give them.

Bolts and bars actually inspire attendants to acts of cruelty and wickedness, for on those rare occasions when indicted for murder or manslaughter they know

they will be given the benefit of the doubt, since the ignorant Public assume that the work is dangerous, and argue that the occasional sacrifice of the life of an insane patient is unavoidable, therefore justifiable. The indifference of the employers of the attendants who do not care to protect their charges from assault, is quite as much to blame as the brutality of the attendants, and these are less deserving of censure than the doctors, who weakly resign themselves to what they call "conditions."

No general practitioner should be allowed to commit a patient to an asylum. Special wards similar to that described as Pavilion F should be attached to every general hospital, and here patients should be kept under observation for at least a fortnight, be treated by specialists only, nursed by skilled, trained attendants, and committed, if necessary, by these specialists to asylums. The employment of specially-trained male and female attendants should be compulsory in every asylum in the United Kingdom.

Secondarily, the number of commissioners should be doubled, or even trebled, and at least the third of the number be duly qualified women doctors. The increase of expenditure this would entail would be but a trifling matter; the present salaries are amply sufficient to provide good pay to thrice the present number of men.

Every month commissioners should visit every asylum, public and private, and examine such patients

that are recovering, to obviate unnecessary lengthy detention, and with these should rest—not with the medical superintendent—the right to discharge a recovered patient. At present, the testimony of three persons is required to commit a patient, but strange inconsistency, only one—the doctor, to whose interest it often is to detain a patient in a private asylum—to discharge him.

Private asylums that are run for profit should be swept away and institutions on the plan of the Munich Clinic take their place.

There should be a fully-qualified resident woman doctor in every asylum where women are confined; she should be a specialist in mental and women's diseases, and give her whole time to the patients in her charge.

The general health of the patients should receive due care, and it should be the duty of the Commissioners to test the quality of food supplied, which should be good and nourishing.

Each patient should be allowed to write to, at least, four friends to whom his letters should not be supervised, and he should receive those sent him. I cannot forbear in this connection from again quoting Mr. Beers, who speaks, as I can, from an unhappy experience of the loss of letters and the mental suffering this loss entailed :—

“Many letters written for the deliberate purpose of re-establishing myself in the sane world were destroyed

by the doctor, and when I charged him with the offence, he merely replied that he did not approve of the sentiments I had expressed. . . . In the sane world this is an odious and criminal act, then surely it is doubly a crime when its commission injures a person already stripped of most of his privileges by the State. . . . At this very moment many patients, quite capable of writing fairly lucid, even sane, letters are, for any number of reasons, kept out of touch with relatives and friends. . . . Instead of encouraging intercourse so beneficial to the sufferers, doctors, with few exceptions, tacitly discourage it and frankly advise against it, plausibly explaining that the receiving and reading of messages from home tends to excite the patient, especially when he first enters the asylum. This is worse than an error of judgment, it is positive cruelty. The patient has enough to contend against without being forced to fight for life and liberty unsupported by messages from those he loves. The first weeks of exile are those that determine the patient's attitude towards his new and distressing environment. If to a patient's loneliness there be added the suspicion of a belief that his friends and relatives have forsaken him, does it not stand to reason that his recovery will be retarded if, indeed, the consequent dejection does not for ever render recovery impossible? . . . As conditions now are, hundreds of true accounts of abuse are confiscated by those directly, or indirectly, guilty of it; and much that

makes the lives of the inmates so miserable has continued so long, because of the ease with which a careless, if not criminal, management may cover its tracks. A due observance of the liberty of correspondence would go far to destroy this unjust immunity. The real motive of only too many physicians is not, as they aver, the keeping of their charges in a calm and peaceful frame of mind. But their real motive is likely to be nothing more than a cowardly desire to protect themselves against well-merited criticism by the public."

Knowing that an account of the inhuman treatment I received on the first night of my arrival at the asylum would be treated by my sisters as a delusion, as they insisted the hundreds of bruises on my wasted body were the work of my own hands, when in the "Home," I wrote to an intimate friend, recounting my experiences, but that letter was never sent, although I was charged with its postage. Other letters also were confiscated. I have already related how Miss H—— was prevented from writing to her brother, and such ruses and dodges are only too common in private asylums, and mayhap public ones too, to the shame of those who resort to them.

If the reader should consider that my reforms are too drastic, and but the idle vapourings of a disordered brain, the proof of the need for them lies in his own hands. He has but to enter a private asylum where Restraint is in force, taking with him a very bad

record—there will be no necessity for him to act up to it—and I will guarantee that before twenty-four hours have expired he will not only fully agree with every reform set out here, but he will have formulated a dozen of his own, far more drastic than mine, and in his own estimation equally necessary.



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